MARCH
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# Adventure

HEREAFTER
TWICE A MONTH
See Page 180

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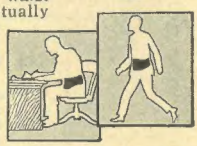

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Number 6

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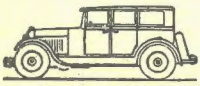

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# Adventure

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# Contents for March 30th, 1926, Issue


**A Light for His Pipe** *A Complete Novel* . . . . . **W. Townend** 1
Seaport—all for want of a match.

**Almost An Emperor** *Ambition* . . . . . **R. B. Preston** 75

**Carnival** . . . . . **Fiswoode Tarleton** 76
Kentucky Mountains—the old fellow would be a musician.

**Discipline** . . . . . **L. Patrick Greene** 83
Africa—sacrifice to the river gods.

**Kentucky Play** *Nice Playmates* . . . . . **Arthur Woodward** 94

**Mistaken Island** . . . . . **Thomson Burtis** 95
Air—winner take all.

**Log Cabin Men** *A Five-Part Story Part IV* . . . . . **Hugh Pendexter** 115
New England—captured by Indians.

**Post-operative Treatment** *A Matter of Environment* . **Leonard H. Nason** 143


**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*


**(Continued on next page)**

(*Continued from preceding page*)

**Black Powder Diplomacy** . . . . . **H. P. Guiler, Jr.** 144
Chinese Waters—Naval courtesy, by all means!

**Smiley** . . . . . **Walter J. Coburn** 151
Montana—so they bought him the place.

**The Stuff of Filibusters** *Iron Men* . . . . . **Eugene Cunningham** 157

**In the Boneyard** . . . . . **Robert Carse** 158
Waterfront—the gunner refused to fire.

**Bookkeeping à la Cajun** *Picture Debts* . . . . . **Nevil Henshaw** 163

**Bhamo** . . . . . **S. B. H. Hurst** 164
India—"Pipe the monocle!"

**War** *One Man's Viewpoint* . . . . . **Bill Adams** 178

**The Camp-Fire** **A free-to-all meeting-place for readers, writers and adventurers** . . . . . 179

**Camp-Fire Stations** . . . . . 186

**Lost Trails** . . . . . 186

**Various Practical Services Free to Any Reader** . . . . . 186

**Ask Adventure** . . . . . 187
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**Old Songs That Men Have Sung** . . . . . 191

**The Trail Ahead** . . . . . 192

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# Notice

BEGINNING with the next issue, ADVENTURE will be published twice instead of three times a month. The dates of publication will be the 8th and the 23rd. See note in Camp-Fire of this issue, page 180.

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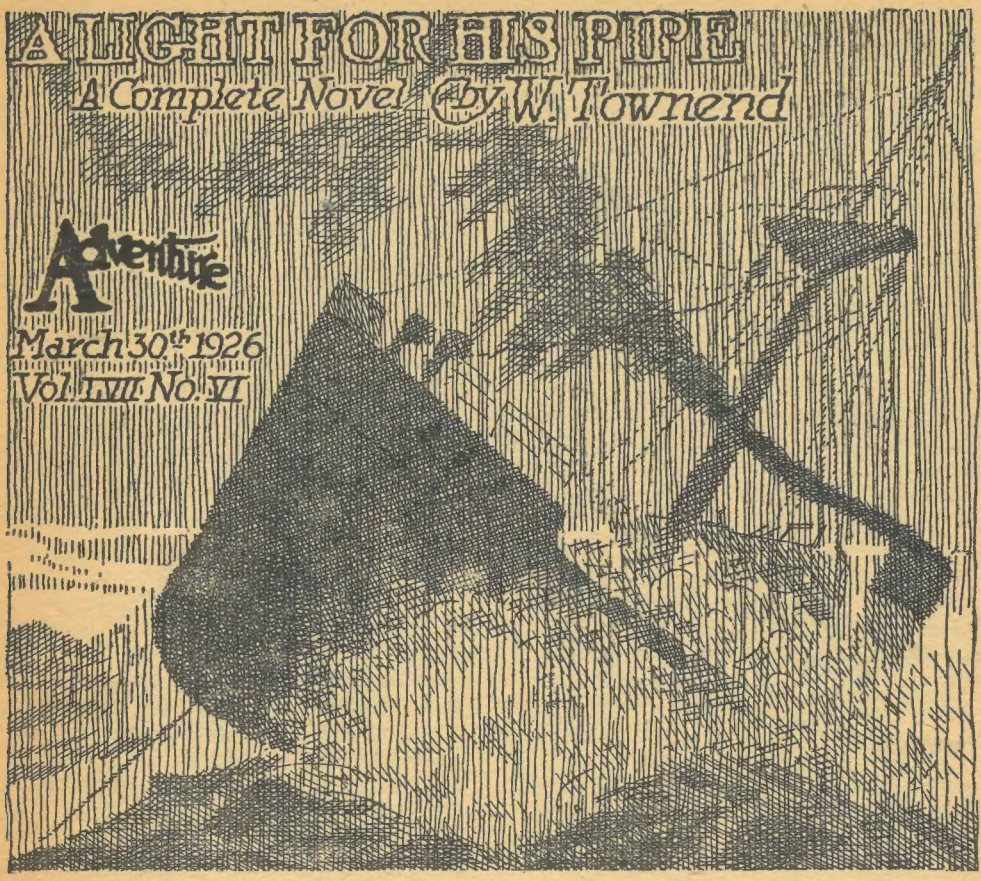


*Author of "Pratt," "A Miracle of the Mission," etc.*

"CHUCK" MARTIN, a deck-hand from the S. S. *Emerald Reef*, walked leisurely along the Embarcadero toward the Ferry Building, whistling softly to himself, at peace with the world.

He had, for once, no worries. He was conscious of having done no wrong to any man; no wrong that could be charged to him, anyway. He had no enemies who might make trouble when least expected. Even the mate was friendly. There was money in his pocket, money he'd won honestly at crown and anchor in the firemen's forecastle, and he was going to spend the evening ashore with "Blooey" Radkin—good old Blooey—his pal, about the only man aboard the old hooker he'd any time for! There would be drinks, trust old Blooey! Blooey would find liquor somehow on a ship's lifeboat in the middle of the Western Ocean, and cigars and perhaps a show and, maybe, if Blooey felt that way, they'd drop in some joint or other on Pacific Street and show the gals how they danced on Tyneside, and when they'd had enough of that they'd duck out, away from the girls hollering for hard-earned cash, and drift down Kearney, past Portsmouth Square with the hop-heads sleeping out, to Market, where they'd find some place to have a feed of ham and eggs and coffee to wind up with before going aboard again.

Chuck grinned. No one in all San Francisco was happier than he!

He shoved the stem of his black clay pipe into his mouth and halted outside O'Regan's slop shop and groped in his pockets for a match.

But he hadn't a match. Not a one! He wanted a smoke. Where now could he get a match?

There came slowly toward him a serious looking young man, dressed in a tweed

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suit that was no better than his own. His face was pale, he had black hair, his eyes were downcast and as he walked he muttered. He looked like a man trying to remember something important that had slipped his mind.

Chuck knew him by sight. That very morning the boatswain had pointed him out as the fourth engineer of the *Honda*, loading cargo at the same pier as the *Emerald Reef*, and had called him a "bloomin' poet," MacSomething-or-other, Scotch and always writing, so the *Honda's* carpenter had told him, and not all there! Balmy on the crumpet, like. Dippy! They'd been interested at that, the lot of them. A fourth engineer what wrote poetry! Crumbs! What next?

Chuck coughed and planted himself in front of him and spoke:

"Beg pardon, mister. Could you oblige me with a light for me pipe?"

But Mr. MacRae, the fourth engineer of the S. S. *Honda*, was at that precise moment far away from San Francisco waterfront and the Ferry Building and the street cars and arc lamps and cobbles. He happened to be, with Mr. Masefield's verses in his mind, loafin' around Sailortown, a bluin' of his advance, and he'd met a derelict donkeyman who led him a merry dance.

But how in thunder did it go after that? He pondered.

* "It's a solemn gospel, mate," he says, "but a man as ships aboard
A steamer-tramp, he gets his whack of the wonders of the Lord—
Such as roaches crawlin' over his bunk, 'n' snakes inside his bread,
And work—"

Mr. MacRae was suddenly conscious of some one tormenting him and asking him silly questions; some one who was neither the second engineer nor the third who were everlastingly making fun of him and his poetry, but some one he didn't know and never had known and never would know, if he could help it, a stranger. Not a very presentable-looking stranger, either. He was annoyed at being interrupted.

"What d'you want?" he snapped. "Eh?"

"Could you oblige me with a light for me pipe, please, mister?"

"Oh, go to blazes!" said Mr. MacRae.

He scowled and walked slowly on. How was it possible to make verses just by using plain, ordinary language like they used aboard ship? That was the mystery! Kipling did it and Masefield did it. Why shouldn't he?

"And work by night and work by day enough to strike him dead—"

Why couldn't he write like that?

What Chuck had said passed from his mind.

"Could you oblige me with a light for me pipe, please, mister?"

The words had never been spoken. Chuck had no real existence. He was a fantasy. A nothing. Mr. MacRae was aboard the *Esmeralda*, casual tramp, on his way from Hull to the Hook, with one o' the brand o' Cain for mate 'n' a human mistake for cook!

But if Chuck Martin meant nothing to him, Mr. MacRae meant everything to Chuck.

The stocky, square deck-hand stood on the greasy sidewalk outside O'Regan's slop shop with its oilskins hanging at the door and the sea-boots and southwesters and shirts and underclothing and overalls and stared after him, amazed and shocked.

Of all the —— rude stuck-up swine he'd ever met, that man, that MacSomething-or-other what wrote poetry, was the worst! The mean, knock-kneed, pigeon-chested little louse! Fourth engineer of the *Honda*, and he thought himself too good to speak to an A. B.! The more he considered it the more annoyed Chuck was. Anger surged over him in hot waves.

"Could you oblige me with a light for me pipe, please, mister? Please!"

And the fourth engineer of the *Honda* had sworn at him.

"Go to blazes, —— you!"

What kind of talk was that? Cursing and swearing and blinding for no reason! What kind of fellers were they aboard the —— *Honda*, anyway?

Chuck spat into the gutter and turned and moved on once more.

His happiness had gone. His evening was spoiled completely. He'd asked for a light for his pipe and he'd been sworn at! Sworn at by a miserable —— fourth engineer, without a ticket, even! He'd asked a polite question and been sworn at!

When Blooey Radkin met him at the appointed spot on Market Street, he was still brooding.

* "One of The Bo'sun's Yarns," by John Masefield.

Blooey was in the best of tempers.

"How goes it, Chuck, m' lad? I'd ha' been here sooner if I could ha' managed it, but I couldn't! Important business!"

He closed one eye and blinked.

And then he sensed there was something wrong. As a rule, whatever kind of man he might be on board ship, on dry land Chuck was genial and friendly and cheerful. Now, however, his clean-shaved, red countenance with the cleft chin and the long upper lip and the blunt, crooked nose was hard and grim. In his pale blue eyes there was an expression of fierce suspicion, hostility, rage. He looked as he looked when he was about to hit some one.

Blooey, knowing his friend's limitations, stepped quickly back out of range of his big fists.

"What's wrong, Chuck?" he said.

Chuck's explanation showed him that he at least had not incurred his enmity.

"Listen, Blooey," he said, "I asked a feller from the *Honda* just now if he'd gimme a light for me pipe! See, just like that, I asked him, 'Could you oblige me with a light for me pipe!' I said. 'Please, mister!' And what'd he do? He said, 'Get to —— out o' here, you swab, or I'll give you a clip on the —— ear!' Yes, Blooey, true as I'm a living Christian— '—— you,' he says, 'get out, or I'll smash your blasted face in!' What about that, eh? 'Could you oblige me with a light for me pipe, please!' and he draws off to land me one. I tell you, Blooey, it kind of hurt! See! Me, doing no harm to no one, and that little tough talking like that!"

Chuck smacked his right fist hard down on his left palm.

"All right, then! Now, I tell you, Blooey, I'll show 'em! I'll show 'em what kind o' man I am! I'll show 'em —— *Hondas* they can't wipe their shoes on us chaps! I'll skin 'em alive, I will! Me! I'm not makin' things up, Blooey, I mean it. I'll fight every —— mother's son of 'em! Bring 'em along, Blooey! I don't care how many there are! No crowd from the *Honda's* going to go cursin' an' swearin' at me up and down the waterfront, here or nowhere, and get away with it! You see if I ain't talking!"

But Blooey shook his head. Trouble was the last thing he wanted tonight. Chuck had money on him. They were going to spend it. Every cent! Why couldn't Chuck have some sense? He said—

"Chuck, o' man, I know a joint where we can get as good a drop to drink as you ever tasted!"

Even though he was angry, Chuck was prepared to be reasonable.

"I'm on, Blooey. After what that stiff said to me I want something to help make me forget. But what kind o' stuff, eh? Hooch, manufactured o' wood alcohol an' creosote, or turpentine doped with quinine an' lime juice?"

"Dunno what it is, Chuck, but I've had some and it slips down all right."

"Yeh," said Chuck, "it does. Always. But what happens when it gets there?"

## II

EDWARD SPARROW, known on board the *Honda* as "Spadger," entered the little room at the back of the dark-fronted, closely-shuttered store on Steuart Street where he had been told he could get a drink —the real stuff, pre-war.

Spadger, one of the *Honda's* firemen, a silent, melancholy kind of man, ponderous and slow-moving, built on the large side, had, as usual, come ashore by himself. He was perfectly satisfied with his own society. It was cheap, to begin with. He knew from experience what happened when a feller went drinking with men from his own ship. Among strangers, met casual, it wasn't so bad. A feller could make friends, like, and talk, without being no way expected to fling his money away standing drinks wholesale.

He seated himself at a bare deal table where two other men already sat; one, a man as big as himself, broad-shouldered, with a long upper lip and a crooked nose and bushy eyebrows; the other, smaller, black haired, cheerful, talkative.

Spadger gathered from their conversation that the bigger man was called Chuck, the smaller Blooey.

That was a —— queer name, he reflected —Blooey! Blooey, now. What did they mean by calling a bloke that? Spadger wondered.

A wrinkled, elderly man with thin hair brushed across his bald cranium and pinched features, small, cunning eyes and a stubby mustache, set a glass filled to the brim with some yellow liquor in front of Spadger.

"There," he said, "I bet you ain't tasted nothin' like that before!"

Spadger drank and closed his eyes and coughed and spluttered.

"Coo, it's strong!" He drew a deep breath. "But it's good."

"Good!" said the elderly man. "O' course it's good."

He limped off in response to a shout from the other end of the room.

Spadger took another sip. Even now, fully prepared, he gasped. He wiped his mouth on his sleeve.

The man sitting opposite, the black-haired man known as Blooey, laughed at him.

"Kinda took me unawares," said Spadger by way of apology. "But it's all right, ain't it?"

"Oh, it's all right," said Blooey. "You wouldn't find anything better in San Francisco nowhere!"

"Not at the price," said Chuck heavily, "and it's robbery at that."

Spadger felt that the man called Chuck was in a bad temper. From the way he spoke and looked he seemed out of sorts, sulky. He wondered why. Himself, he was happy. The drink sent a warm glow coursing through his veins. Its taste, he reflected, was queer, —— queer, but the effect on a man was prime. He hadn't tasted anything half so good since the *Honda* had left the Mersey.

He finished his drink and lighted his pipe. Through the haze of tobacco smoke he saw the wrinkled, elderly man who served the drinks shuffling toward the table.

Blooey, the black-haired, grinning man called to him.

"Two more, Mr. Webber!" Then he snapped his fingers. "Make it three." He nodded toward Spadger. "You're in on this, mate. I like the look o' you."

Spadger was not certain whether to be pleased or not. They seemed a decent enough couple o' stiffs. On the other hand, being stood drinks meant standing drinks in return. He didn't like that, of course.

He nodded his thanks and when the drinks were brought raised his glass.

"Well, here's looking at you!"

He began to talk freely.

"Dunno when I been in a place I liked so much as 'Frisco. Different from other ports, ain't it? More doing! Means spending money, but that can't be helped. You'd spend money anywhere. Ever been out to Golden Gate Park? Well, now, that's something to see. And Market Street! Takes some beating, don't it? I been all over the world, mostly, but you can't beat it! No, that's the truth. Market Street, all lit up of a night-time!"

"Costs some money getting from the ferry right the other end, don't it?" said Blooey.

"Nickel car-ride, that's all," said Spadger.

Blooey's lip curled.

"I mean, - walking! Seeing things and wanting to buy 'em."

Spadger had to think.

"Ah," he said. "I see what you mean. But you needn't, need you?" He laughed. "That's how I do 'em down! I don't buy things. Not me!" He had never before realized how smart he was. He was pleased with himself. The two men opposite were the nicest men he had ever met. "Yes," he said, "I don't want to be anywhere better than 'Frisco! And Market Street's the finest street in the world!"

Chuck wouldn't have that, though. He shook his head.

"No. That's where I don't agree. Gimme Princes Street, Edinburgh, any day. I'm not Scotch, thank ——! I'm north of Ireland, but that's not the point. Princes Street, Edinburgh, is the street for me. Far as that goes, there's that there street in Genoa, September something, and the old Rue Cannybeer in Marseilles and Royal Avenue, Belfast, and Broadway, New York. Any o' them streets is better than Market Street. Here, Mr. Webber!" He beckoned. "Three more, and be slippy about it."

Spadger was stubborn.

"Market Street's the finest street in the world," he repeated.

Chuck frowned. He didn't like the way this merchant was talking about Market Street. He didn't like the way he kept contradicting. If he said Market Street was no good, it wasn't, and no one wasn't going to say it was.

"Why, Bute Street, Cardiff, is more entertaining, like, than Market Street, ain't it, Blooey?"

Spadger shouted with laughter. This man, Chuck, was being comic!

"Bute Street, Cardiff!" he said. "Come off it, chum! Bute Street's no good. Never was. Who are yer kiddin'? Why,

Cable Street, Shadwell, is better than Bute Street, or Pennyfields, Limehouse, for that matter, and you know it."

"That shows your —— ignorance!" said Chuck.

Spadger, not in the least offended, chuckled and went on with what he was saying.

"What I like about 'Frisco is you don't have to walk three, four miles before you get anywhere. Of course, if you're over at Port Costa or Point Orient, —— help you! But here, now, in 'Frisco, you've got things at your front door, like. Step ashore and you're there! In the heart o' things! Me, now, I'm a quiet kind o' feller and I like to be by myself. That's my nature. Quiet. Not that I ain't shipmates with a perfeckly good crowd. I am. You won't find a better crowd in a focsle nowhere! Take it all round and barring a couple of stiffs I've no use for, you wouldn't find a better crowd nowhere."

Chuck leaned forward.

"What ship are you on?"

"The *Honda!* As good a vessel as you'd find nowhere! Yes, that's the truth."

Chuck brought his fist down on the table with a crash.

"It's a lie! D'yer hear me! A —— outrageous lie!"

His face was a dark red; his eyes were wide open and fierce; he showed his teeth in a snarl.

Spadger stared at him in amazement.

"What d'yer mean? What's got you, talkin' like that?

"The *Honda's* crowd is the dirtiest, rottenest bunch o' dock-rats that ever sailed! There's half o' them ought to be in clink this minute. A dirty, rotten bunch o' pickpockets! I wouldn't trust one of 'em no further than I could see him! Do you hear what I say, you pimply-faced swab? What d'yer mean sitting there looking like that? Where did you last do time, you dirty Sheenie!"

The drink Spadger had taken made thinking difficult. He felt muzzy and disinclined to exert himself. This man, Chuck, though, was saying things no decent man should say to another without getting his head punched.

"Don't you call me a dirty Sheenie!" he said.

Chuck seized his glass and flung his whisky into his face.

"That's what I think of you, you mongrel! Drink at my expense, would you, and you from the *Honda!* Not if I know it!" He pushed back his chair with a scraping noise on the bare floor boards and jumped to his feet. "Come on," he said. "You got to fight! It's that or be licked!"

## III

AWARE that the chatter of voices and the laughter had died away and that every one in the room was listening and waiting, Spadger wiped the whisky from his face and jacket deliberately. It seemed incredible. One minute things had been quiet and peaceful and jolly, the next there was hard words and whisky flung all over him and what-not!

"What did you do that for?" he asked.

"I did it to show you what I think o' you and the dirty, rotten ship you belong to and the dirty, rotten crowd o' bed bugs you've got aboard! Do you see?"

"You called me a dirty Sheenie," said Spadger. "You got no right to say things like that!"

"I'll show you," said Chuck.

He slapped Spadger on the cheek with his open hand.

Spadger, shaken by the blow, rose to his feet slowly and backed away from the table.

"What the —— do you think you're doing!" he said.

The table was overturned with a crash, glasses were smashed, and Chuck was on him, hitting him, cursing him, hurting him.

He hit back blindly through the fog that enveloped him, a fog of tobacco smoke and dust from the floor, and a fog that seemed in some curious way inside him.

The two men fought in the narrow space between the rows of deal tables. Spectators stood on chairs and pressed back against the walls and laughed and shouted and clapped their hands.

Mr. Webber, the man with the bald head and the pinched face and the stubby mustache, kept shouting:

"Cut it out, fellers, for the love of Mike! Cut it out, or you'll have the bulls here! Oh! for pity's sake, have a heart!"

He tried to drag them apart.

Chuck hit him in the chest.

"Blast you, keep out of it!"

Spadger felt he was losing. He was being suffocated. He wanted the fresh air. He could scarcely breathe. He was dizzy. There were great flashes of light in front of his eyes.

Chuck battered away at him, hitting him with fierce, half-arm blows in the face again and again, giving him no rest.

An uppercut under the chin finished the fight.

Spadger collapsed on the floor, an intolerable pain at the back of his neck.

Chuck pounced on him, dragged him to his feet, swung him about and, holding him by the arms, hustled him out of the room where they had fought into the dark passage. Some one unbarred the door, and they emerged into Steuart Street.

"You asked for it!" said Chuck. "You got it, a-plenty!"

He flung him from him.

Spadger lay in the gutter, groaning.

"——! I'm dead! ——!"

Chuck stood over him.

"I'm from the *Emerald Reef!* Understand? You're from the *Honda!* That's what you fellers from the *Honda* gets for setting yourselves up against us! Put that in your pipe and smoke it! You give me any more lip and what I done to you's nothing to what I will do! Do you get me?"

He drove the toe of his heavy shoe into Spadger's ribs and turned away.

"Come on, Blooey," he said, "let's be moving! D'you notice a kind o' decayed smell round here, like dead codfishes? It's probably that rat off the *Honda!* He ought to be in a garbage can with the lid on. Let's be moving. It ain't healthy near him."

A policeman strolled across the street and tapped at the door which was opened immediately.

"Joe, you gotter be more careful. This kind of thing is going to get you in bad."

"It ain't my fault," said Mr. Webber plaintively. "If those —— limejuicers start scrapping and doggone near break the place up, what can I do?"

"Why didn't you throw 'em out?"

"Fellers that size! What d'yer think I am—Jack Dempsey? They half killed me between 'em, anyways. One o' them was like to of cracked my chest bone, —— him!"

"Well, you gotta be careful, that's all."

"Could you do with something?" said Mr. Webber.

"Mebbe I'll see you later. Not now."

The policeman spoke to Spadger, seated in the gutter.

"What's the matter with you, hey?"

"Nothing's the matter," said Spadger.

"Well, if you don't get outa here, there will be. See?"

Spadger scrambled to his feet. He was still dizzy, his face was bruised, his jaw was so stiff it hurt him to speak, but the fresh air had revived him and he could breathe.

The policeman surveyed him curiously and chuckled.

"You fellers got queer idees how to enjoy yourselves, anyways. Beat it, and don't let me see you hanging round here again!"

Spadger shuffled off in the direction of Market Street.

In the back room Mr. Webber set the overturned table upright once more. One of the chairs he found had its back legs broken. There was a dent in the wall plaster. He swore bitterly. If only those three —— limejuicers hadn't gone, he'd have made them pay for the damage. Coming in here and fighting like tomcats! No sense!

A man said—

"Say, Joe, what's that laying there?"

Mr. Webber looked in the direction indicated by the man's finger and saw on the floor a shabby leather wallet. He stooped.

"One of those fellers scrapping must of dropped it."

"Any money in it?" asked the man.

"Not a durn' cent," said Mr. Webber, examining the pockets of the wallet minutely. "Not even a postage stamp. Papers, that's all. A goil's picture." Two five-dollar bills folded inside a letter he passed without comment. "Nothing at all. I'll keep it and give it him next time I see him."

Mr. Webber was an honest man. He would return the wallet and the money, after deducting sufficient to pay for the damage to the chair and the wall and the three glasses.

Five dollars would cover the lot nicely.

## IV

IN SPADGER'S experience there was no justice in the way things happened. Life was tough, always. Whatever a feller did, he was sure to suffer.

He stood disconsolate outside the Chronicle Building at the junction of Kearney and

Geary and Market Streets and stared miserably at Lotta's fountain, and wondered once more what he had done to bring upon himself so undeserved a punishment. He had endured much in the past, at sea and on shore alike, but never had he had such an abiding, such an overwhelming sense of injury as now.

He had been set upon without warning and knocked senseless; he had been dragged around by his collar, kicked in the ribs, thrown into the gutter. All for no reason. Looking back, even after so short a period of time, the whole business was impossible. If any one else, he felt, was to come and tell him what had happened, how an innocent man had been beaten, he wouldn't have believed him.

And then he saw approaching him across Market Street from the direction of Third Street three of the *Honda's* deck-hands—red-headed Tanqueray, Kinlan, the Irishman, and Wally Armstrong. Tough nuts, the three of them. At another time Spadger would have avoided them as he would have avoided any of the *Honda's* deck-hands, but now being in need of sympathy, he greeted them as friends.

"Hullo, fellers." he said dolefully. "How's tricks?"

"Why, luk who's here!" said Kinlan. "Spadger, the infant prodhigy, the performin' elephant! How are ye, Spadger?"

"What in —— have you been doin' to yer face, Spadger?" said Tanqueray. "What's wrong?"

"I'll tell you what's wrong, Tank. I'll tell you what I've been doing. I've been keeping myself to myself, same as I do always, minding my own business, doing nobody no harm. And what happens? Two of them stiffs from the *Emerald Reef* sets on me. Understand! Two of 'em! Without no cause, neither. 'You from the *Honda*?' they says. 'Yes,' says I. 'I am, and proud of it!' 'Take this, then!' they says, and with that they sets on me, the pair of 'em, without warning! Look at me face! See what they done? I'm marked for life, I am. You wait and see what I'm like by morning!"

He spoke with a gloomy relish, entranced by the thought of the sympathy he was exciting and the plight he was in.

"You wait and see. Marked for life. Why, just now, fellers, I met an old feller who wanted to take me to hospital and have me looked after!"

"You must have done something pretty bad to make them two set on you!" said Wally Armstrong.

Spadger was indignant.

"Cross me heart and hope I may die, I did nothing, said nothing! I kept myself to myself, spoke when I was spoken to, and behaved like a civilized human being. But them two! We was setting at the same table, them and me, having a drink, like, and before you could say a word, the pair o' them went for me! And why? Because I belong to the *Honda*, that's why! Set on me, they did, knocked me about cruel, kicked me, left me bleeding in the gutter! I'm telling you no lies, fellers, that's the gospel truth, every word of it!"

The three deck-hands considered.

They hadn't much time for firemen, none of them. The *Honda's* firemen were in their estimation a particularly poisonous lot, sea lawyers, idlers, spongers, wasters, not even good at their own job. Nevertheless, this one, old Spadger, had never done no one no harm. Why should two fellers, two of 'em, set on old Spadger and treat him bad? By ——! It was terrible!

"Fellers who'd do that ought to be kicked from 'ere to the Cliff 'Ouse!" said Tanqueray. "With 'ob-nailed boots on!"

"That's thrue," said Kinlan. "If ye cud p'int out them fellas that give ye the batin', Spadger, I'd sthart to worruk on 'em at wance!"

"As far as that goes," said Armstrong, "you needn't be so blasted particular if they was the fellers what hurt Spadger so long as they come from the *Emerald Reef*. If they done all that to him just because he come from the *Honda*, then I'm for knocking the stuffing out the first man I see from the *Emerald Reef!* Come on, fellers, let's see if we can scare up a drink before we get busy!"

Spadger shook his head.

"I'm through with drinking—for tonight. I've had enough. There's the taste of the stuff in me gullet yet. You pay ten times as much for a drink as it's worth and then when you get it—" As he spoke, he felt in the inside pocket of his jacket for his wallet. "And then when you get it, it ain't worth the trouble o' putting inside you. It ain't worth—"

He broke off abruptly. A cold horror gripped him. His wallet was gone! Lost! Stolen!

"Fellers, do you know what's happened now? Them two swine from the *Emerald Reef* pinched me wallet. I'd twenty dollars in that there wallet and they've taken it! Every cent I had in the world was in me wallet! It's gone! They dumped me into the gutter, they did, knocked me stiff, kicked me, and then before I come to went through me pockets and stole me wallet and all the money I got!"

The three deck-hands were shocked into silence.

Old Spadger they knew was speaking the truth. His anguish was too real to be put on. His money was stolen. Twenty dollars! Poor Spadger, who ordinarily was too —— mean to spend a penny on no one else but himself, had lost his money! Serve him right, too, in a way, for being a miser! All the same it was hard on the poor feller, and them *Emerald Reefs* needed a lesson!

"The first man from the *Emerald Reef* I see," said Tanqueray, "I'll land him one that will show him who's who! I'll bash his 'ead in! They can't do what they like with us fellers, and they needn't think it!"

## V

MR. HUMPHREYS, the mate of the *Emerald Reef*, a spare, wiry young man of twenty-nine, active in mind and body, reserved in his speech, a student of human nature and a reader, and Mr. Ross, the second engineer, his senior by some half dozen years, but his junior in manner and disposition and his outlook on life, had dined sumptuously and cheaply in the Italian quarter in a restaurant that reminded them of a place they had known in Naples the voyage before and were now sightseeing in Grant Avenue.

They sauntered slowly along the crowded sidewalks and peered into the windows of small Chinese stores or bazaars where they could see exposed for sale gorgeously decorated hangings, Tientsin rugs, jade ornaments and necklaces, vases that might have been Ming and weren't, bronzes and porcelains, bowls and images of many colors and shapes and sizes, ferocious masks and swords and armor, jars of ginger and caddies of tea, carpets, silken garments suitable for princesses and film stars, but not, so Mr. Ross said flatly, to be thought of for the wives of second engineers living in Birkenhead; Tibetan goatskins, brass trays and gongs, pearl necklaces—"imitation, I bet," said Mr. Ross—weird stringed musical instruments and quaint-looking, dried up foodstuffs that brought to mind the teeming, crowded markets of Canton and Shanghai and Singapore.

From time to time, after earnest consultation, they would enter a store and spend small sums of money judiciously, deceiving themselves into the belief held by all seafaring men that their natural astuteness and their powers of observation enabled them to pick up bargains from bland, innocent-appearing Chinamen, where the ordinary, irresponsible, ignorant landsman was bound to fail.

Though a bachelor, Mr. Humphreys was engaged to the daughter of the *Emerald Reef's* chief engineer. His attitude toward his future father-in-law puzzled him. He respected him and admired him. Old Mac, as he put it, was a —— good sort, but, and this was the drawback, pertinacious, intent on making sure that the man his daughter married was a man who'd make her a good husband, good according to his own high standards, not other men's, necessarily, which was a different matter, entirely.

That the chief approved of him Mr. Humphreys knew. A year had passed now since he had announced solemnly—being a widower the task had fallen on him alone—that although he would have preferred him to have a command first, he could see no insuperable objection to his being engaged to his daughter.

But there must be no headlong running into matrimony with the risk of unhappiness to follow.

It appeared from observation that Mr. Humphreys had only one real source of enjoyment—here the chief had grown bitter—and that was to try to do things that nobody else on board the *Emerald Reef* or on board any other ship would ever have dreamed of attempting. What man in his right senses would risk life and limb in diving from the heights he did, or go swimming in shark-infested waters with a knife to prove the white man as good as the black, or take the ship's gig sailing in broken water all among reefs and rocks, seemingly just for the mere sake of a thrill, or of his own free will interfere in waterfront scraps because he thought it his duty to help the weaker side, perhaps some unfortunate woman, no better morally than she ought to

have been, and well able to take care of herself, as subsequent scars on her would-be rescuer had, in one unfortunate instance in Glasgow, proved only too well!

It wasn't right. Mr. Humphreys—Dan only on rare occasions—would have to drop playing the fool and take life more seriously. A girl like Maggie, light-headed enough as it was, needed a husband she could lean on and rely on, a man who was cautious in his attitude toward problems that might arise. And where was the sense of a husband who, like as not, got himself killed in the first six months of his married life? There must be no more fighting, no more running unnecessary risks, and no talk of marriage yet. Mr. Humphreys must prove first he could be trusted to behave like a normally sensible man, a man of discretion and sound judgment.

And so Mr. Humphreys, chafing against what he considered the chief engineer's old-maidish restrictions, had set out to show that he could, if he tried, be sensible and cautious and worthy to marry a girl so wonderful in every way as Maggie MacLennan. In the meantime, a frustrated though philosophical lover, he bought her many presents in each port and spent more money than he ought to have done.

The second engineer, Mr. Ross, was a Scotsman like his chief, and thrifty. He carried about with him wherever he went a list his wife had given him of things that he should try and procure and the prices which he should pay. If he could buy at less than the sum indicated, so much the better.

Mr. Ross's own judgment was good, but the mate's was better, he knew. There were times when he had taken his advice and bought against his own instincts, much to his profit. For this reason alone he was glad of the mate's company on his shopping excursions ashore.

Their progress through Chinatown was slow. Inevitably. There was no real reason for haste. They lingered awhile in Portsmouth Square and watched the lights and the passers-by and the quaint-fronted Chinese houses. They sniffed with fond appreciation the age old smells of the East—sandalwood, incense, decayed vegetables, rotting fish, spices and meat, over-ripe fruit, cocoanut matting, goats, punk sticks, mingled with gasoline and raw damp.

"But it's not like it used to be before the war," said Mr. Humphreys. "When I was a youngster serving my time, we lay here three months at the Union Iron Works after we ran on a rock in a fog up the coast, Mendocino way, and were hauled off and towed into the bay here, with about a quarter of our keel ripped to blazes. ——! That was a smash and no mistake. I've told you about it, haven't I? I got to know Grant Avenue well. Dupont Street they used to call it, though, surely. Perhaps they call it that now! I must ask. Some queer joints I've been in, too. Gambling houses, fan-tan, and so on, opium dens, way down under the ground, with bunks one over another like a focsle, and chop suey eating-places and fishy little saloons and —— knows what. But that was years ago, of course. It's different now. And yet when you look at it and smell it, it's the same old burg!"

"Aye," said Mr. Ross, "it's a wunnerfu' city, 'Frisco!"

"San Francisco," said Mr. Humphreys. "If you call it 'Frisco, they don't like it."

"Och, aye, I furgot."

"It must have been pretty tough before the fire, of course," Mr. Humphreys went on. "The old Barbary Coast. Pacific Street and the dance halls. It wasn't the healthiest of neighborhoods even when I first came here."

The second engineer coughed.

"From what the third tells me I dinna think it's ower healthy the noo!"

"I shouldn't wonder," said the mate dryly. "Man, I've seen some gory fights round this part! I've seen knives used and guns, too. Once when two, three of us were going back to the ship we saw a couple of hoodlums set on a man, drunk he was, and a seaman, of course, in an alley. We were young then, heroes, the lot of us, and we'd rescue him. Did we? We didn't. One of the toughs drew a revolver from under his arm somewhere and said, 'If you b'ys want to get killed, come on! If you b'ys want to live, beat it!' We beat it! We told a cop. He told us to beat it, too. Next day we read in *The Call* they'd found a dead sailor. But that kind of thing's finished now. Chinatown and the Coast's as safe as Market Street or the mission. That's progress, of course. Good-by, romance! But if romance means getting knocked on the back of the head, good luck to it! Whatever they tell you, Mr. Ross, the old days were the bad days. The further back you go, the

worse they are! I've found that out for myself, Mister, by what I've seen and by what I've read! The good old days didn't ever exist!"

On the other side of the street Spadger and Armstrong and Kinlan and Tanqueray stood in a group and watched the mate and the second engineer of the *Emerald Reef* and whispered.

"Them two," said Spadger. "They're from the *Emerald Reef*."

"You certain?" said Tanqueray.

"Spadger's right," said Armstrong. "I seen them leaving the pier together this evening."

"They'll do for a sthart!" said Kinlan.

"Wait till we get 'em into somewhere where it's more quiet, like," said Spadger.

## VI

MR. HUMPHREYS glanced over his shoulder. Was it imagination or were four men following them? He'd seen four men, these four or four very much like them, a block farther back.

He walked on in silence. At Sacramento Street he touched Mr. Ross on the arm.

"Jock, I think four men are following us. I may be wrong or I may not. We'll turn here. Have a look round, pretend there's nothing the matter and see if you can spot them."

"Aye," said Mr. Ross, "I see them. Are ye sure it's us they're followin'?"

"No. But we'll find out pretty quick."

He led the way down Sacramento Street to Kearney, where he turned south and walked a block to California Street.

"We'll turn up here, back to Grant Avenue. They're following us, Jock. Do you see them?"

"Aye, I see them. Who are they?"

"Haven't the least idea. —— funny, anyway!"

At St. Mary's Church Mr. Humphreys paused and once again glanced over his shoulder. The four men were walking toward them.

"Let's cross to the other side," he said.

A rattling cable car separated them from the four men.

"Something's —— queer," said Mr. Humphreys. "We'd better make haste."

They increased their pace up the slope of California Street. The four men were still following.

Mr. Humphreys was irritated.

"What's it mean, eh? Trouble ahead or what?"

"Let's stop an' esk what is't they want," said Mr. Ross. "We canna gang on like this a' nicht, onywey!"

They halted.

Spadger twisted his bruised and swollen lips into a grin.

"We got 'em!" he said.

"Right!" said Tanqueray, the red-headed deck-hand. "You and me 'll tackle the feller on the left. Wally, you and Kinlan 'll lay the other one out. No fuss! D'yer see! Couple o' jolts an' you can let 'em lay!"

The four men from the *Honda* moved forward cautiously.

Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Ross found their way barred by a truculent-looking, thick-set, burly man with a soft-brimmed hat pulled down over his forehead.

"You guys from the *Emerald Reef*?"

The man was a deck-hand, obviously. What the —— did he mean by speaking like that, then? Mr. Humphreys, R. N. R. in the war, still retained sufficient of the R. N. aloofness in his make-up to resent the tone he used. Normally mild-mannered, conciliatory, even, this dogging his steps had roused him to anger.

"What the ——'s it to do with you whether we're from the *Emerald Reef* or not?"

Tanqueray laughed.

"I'll tell you what it's to do with us. We're from the *Honda*, you're from the *Emerald Reef*, and we're going to knock —— out of you!"

With no further explanation the red-headed deck-hand drove his fist hard against Mr. Humphreys's mouth.

"That's from the *Honda*, you swine!"

Mr. Humphreys was shaken by the blow. His packages—a jar of ginger, a blue china tea pot, "velly lare," the Chinese salesman had assured him, a meerschaum pipe in a case, a jade necklace—slipped from his hands to the stone flags. By the light of an arc lamp he saw the man who had hit him advance, grinning. He saw, too, out of the corner of his eye another man, crouching, ready, it seemed, to spring on him and batter him to the ground with his huge fists.

Tanqueray spoke from the corner of his mouth.

"In you go, Spadger!"

Mr. Humphreys wheeled suddenly. His right arm shot out, his clenched fist caught the man—Spadger, it appeared was his name—in the face with a sound like the crack of a stock whip. He groaned, his knees bent under him, and he collapsed.

Mr. Humphreys turned in time to meet the other man's rush.

After that he had his hands full, as he said later when he told the story aboard ship.

"He was like an eel, that man, India-rubber and whalebone and steel springs. See where he hit me? Look at my nose! Broken, of course! Look at my lips and my eye! Pretty-looking specimen, aren't I? ——, but that red-headed merchant could hit! I could hit, too. I thought I could, anyhow. I wasn't able to put him out, though, all the same. I'd no excuse. After I finished off his partner, it was one against one. See! He was too much for me, really. Too big and too strong. But not so fit! If he hadn't been drinking that cheap rotgut liquor they buy, he'd have just about half killed me! The moral is, if you want to go fighting, don't booze!"

He had laughed when he remembered the fight—the arc lamps, the darkness and the wet sea-fog creeping up the hill from the bay, the puckered, grinning faces of Chinamen. But things had been going none too well with himself and the second engineer when the two deck-hands had come to their rescue.

Mr. Ross was hard pressed.

Armstrong was punching him in the face. Kinlan had hold of his right wrist and was hitting him in the body. Mr. Ross, unable to defend himself, dropped onto his knees, grabbed Armstrong around the legs with his left arm and threw him.

Tanqueray, bleeding from a cut lip, and Mr. Humphreys had clinched and were holding each other.

"Spadger," Tanqueray shouted, "what's come to you?"

But Spadger's fighting was finished for the time being.

He stood in the shadows, limp and exhausted, one eye completely closed, the other only half open, dried blood on his face, his lips swollen.

Mr. Humphreys freed his left arm with a wrench. Tanqueray was too quick for him. Before he could drive home his blow, he was shaken by a terrific half arm jolt on the heart. For a moment he felt sick. Everything went dark in front of him, the arc lamps, the faces, the lights on the buildings on either side, the battered features of the red-headed man he was fighting.

He rested his head on Tanqueray's shoulder and with his left hand smothered all his efforts to hit him.

"Leggo," said Tanqueray. "Leggo, blast you!"

"Wait till I get you in daylight!" said Mr. Humphreys grimly. "Just wait!"

Idle words, he knew. In the daylight this red-headed man would have butchered him.

Chuck Martin and Blooey Radkin, attracted by the clamor, shouting and the clapping of hands, came panting up the hill.

They stood for a moment, watching the fight from the back of the crowd. And then Chuck saw above the heads in front of him the grim, lean face of Mr. Humphreys, the mate, looking pretty much as he always looked, only more angry and fierce and covered with blood, wrestling and fighting with a man about his own height, but heavier and stronger; a heavy-set, scowling man with narrow eyes and a short nose and flaming red hair.

A sudden movement among the spectators near him gave him a glimpse of the second engineer on his knees, gripping the legs of a man seated on the stones, leaning back and resting on his right elbow while the fingers of his left hand were twisted in the second engineer's hair. Another man, standing, was hitting the second engineer great blows in the face and trying to drag him away from the man he had by the legs.

The second engineer's face was white. He seemed exhausted.

Chuck shouted to Blooey some little distance away from him:

"Come on, Blooey, it's the mate and the second engineer! Get busy!"

## VII

ONLY the day before the mate had called Chuck Martin names Chuck would never forgive or forget. The circumstances, forgotten all evening till then, came back to him vividly. The mate was a superior, sarcastic swine, and he hated him. He had reason to hate him. All the same, he wasn't

too bad, as mates went, and he was a shipmate and, anyway, why worry about what was done with?

And so Chuck hit the man who was fighting the mate behind the ear, and watched him slide over and lie with his red head and his knees together and his arms limp by his sides. He disregarded the mate's breathless, "That's —— good of you, Martin!" and turned to see Blooey, always a good man in a free-for-all, with his two hands tightly clasped about the neck of the man who had been hitting the second engineer while the second engineer himself still held the other man by the legs in spite of all his efforts to fling him off.

Chuck tapped him on the shoulder.

"All right, Mr. Ross, leave him to me!"

The second engineer let go. The man tried to scramble to his feet. He was still off his balance when Chuck hit him under the jaw.

He lay on his back, motionless save for a slight twitching of his limbs.

Kinlan, the man Blooey had by the neck, tore himself free. Blooey swung his right and hit him with all his force in the ribs under the heart. He staggered, then turned and bolted.

"That settles the lot of 'em!" said Chuck.

"Let's get away from the crowd," said the mate. "The police will be here in two ticks. I don't want to be run in if you do!"

Tanqueray was sitting up, bending forward, his hands clasped at the back of his head. Armstrong still lay where he had fallen.

"You're going to hear more about this, don't make any mistake!" said the mate.

Spadger had watched the end of the fight in dazed silence. Now he roused himself. Though still shaken, he was feeling better. Queer, how things had gone wrong! Trouble always! Fights and black eyes and bruises! Fellers punching you! Fellers pinching your money!

And then a sudden fierce anger swept him away from the contemplation of his misfortunes. He recognized the man called Chuck who, without warning, with no excuse, had fought him in the back room of the house on Steuart Street and had stolen his wallet.

He tried to force his way through the scattered groups of Chinamen to reach him.

"You, Chuck!" he called. "Here, come here!"

Even in his own ears his voice sounded thin and muffled.

"You stole my money, you —— thief!"

Chuck never heard him.

He was following the mate and the second engineer down the slope toward Grant Avenue, with Blooey Radkin by his side.

"Did yer see me hit that guy?" Blooey said. "Irish feller, he was, from his swearing. Seen him before somewhere I have. No good, that feller. Irish, he was! Did yer hear him swearing?"

Chuck didn't like that.

"I'm Irish, ain't I?" he said sourly.

Blooey laughed.

"Oh, you're Irish all right, Chuck! Cardiff Irish!"

"Shut up!" said Chuck.

They walked on down the slope of California Street in silence.

When they reached Kearney Street, the mate halted and spoke for the first time since he had left the scene of the fight.

He was furious. That he and the second engineer should have been set on like that for no reason, set on and punched and ill-treated, was outrageous, horrible, unheard of!

"You know who those men were, Mr. Ross, don't you?"

"I dinna. They're —— scoondrels, that's a' I ken! Fufteen dollars worth o' china broken."

"They're focsle hands from the *Honda*."

"The *Honda!*" said Chuck. "Well, now, lemme tell you, there's something in the wind. Yes, sir, all evening we've been having trouble with them fellers from off the *Honda*. First one picking on us, then another. All from the *Honda!* I might have known it was fellers from the *Honda* scrapping the moment I see it was you, sir, and Mr. Ross fighting. Yes, sir, it's the *Honda!* They've got it in for us. That's the truth, sir, you mark my words! You see if I'm not right!"

The mate frowned and considered what Martin had told him. Even now he could not quite rid himself of the thought that where there was any trouble, however innocent he might appear to be on the facts as known, Martin was somehow or other to blame.

"Now listen to me, Martin," he said, "this is important! Are you willing to swear that you and Radkin here didn't do anything to give the *Honda's* crowd an excuse to

set on us? You didn't start all this fuss, did you?"

"Mister," said Chuck, "may I never see home again and me poor old mother if I'm telling a lie. I never done nothing. No, sir. I been blackguarded and sworn at to-night, sir, an' not raised a hand in me own defence. That's the truth. Not till I'd swallered more insults and back chat than I ever swallered before in me life did I stand up for me rights, sir, as a man! No, sir, I'm speaking the truth. This time, sir—" Chuck smiled almost one might have said pityingly—"this time, sir, I'm not going to plead guilty. If I did, sir, I'd be telling a lie, and that's not my way, sir, and never was."

The mate grunted. That this man, Martin, was the most consistent liar on board the *Emerald Reef* admitted of no argument. Nevertheless he believed that what he had told him was true.

"All right," he said. He dug his hand down into his pocket. "I'm much obliged to you two men for what you did. Here's four dollars, two dollars apiece. Go get yourself a drink somewhere, if you want to. My advice is, though, go straight aboard and don't get yourselves mixed up with any of the *Honda's* bunch till I've had a chance to straighten things out and put in a report."

"Thank you, sir," said Chuck. "Radkin and me, sir, we won't forget what you say. We're not looking for trouble, are we, Blooey? No, sir, we'll come straight aboard!"

What a hope! he thought.

## VIII

THE *Emerald Reef*, lying at the same pier as the *Honda*, was a big, steel tramp, fifteen years old, 4804.24 tons gross, 2676.01 tons register, length 375 feet, breadth ext. 52 feet, depth mld. 30.9 feet, H.P. 480, engines 26 x 44 x 73, stroke 48 inches, three boilers, 180 pounds.

All was quiet on board. From the galley there came the sound of voices. Forward in the firemen's forecastle some one was playing a concertina.

Captain Gardiner, the master, a big, broad, heavily built man, six feet tall, with a big, fleshy nose and pouched lids to his eyes, opened the starboard door of his room on the bridge-deck and sniffed.

"Foggy night! Hm!"

The chief engineer, Mr. MacLennan, who sat at the table on which was a chess board, yawned and rose to his feet.

"Aye, you've mated me. I've lost."

"Another drink, 'Mac'?"

"No. Two's my limit. I'm going to turn in. I'm sleepy."

"I'm sleepy myself. Well, Mac, the day after tomorrow we'll be away."

"Tahiti and Auckland and then, with any luck, a cargo for home!"

"I wish we were going home direct by Panama. I had a letter today saying my little girl's not so well. I'd like to see for myself. Mothers are panicky always. No gumption. They take what a doctor says as the truth and leave it at that. Blindly, as you might put it!"

"Aye," said Mr. MacLennan, "they look at the worst side o' things!"

"Who's that coming aboard, I wonder," said the captain.

From the darkness there came the voice of Mr. Hollick, the second mate.

"Whatever's the matter with you two?"

"I'll tell you whatever's the matter, Mister! Look at our faces! We were set on by a gang from the *Honda* and —— near smashed up. That's what's the matter! I won't be able to open my mouth for a week. I can't breathe through my nose."

The captain and the chief engineer stood in the doorway. At the head of the starboard companion that led down to the saloon and the starboard saloon alleyway and the mate's and the second mate's rooms and the pantry and the steward's room, Mr. Hollick was talking to the mate and the second engineer.

The mate had a black eye and a cut lip. His chin and his cheeks were covered with red bruises. His nose was twisted and swollen.

The second engineer had two black eyes. He opened his mouth and showed a gap where a tooth was missing. His face was paler even than usual. He had slipped his right hand inside his buttoned jacket.

"I can't account for it," Mr. Humphreys was saying. "So far as I'm concerned and Mr. Ross is concerned, it was unprovoked. We did nothing. I've never had anything like that happen to me all the years I've been going to sea."

Mr. Ovenden, the third mate, had joined the group on the bridge-deck.

"Where were you when it started, Mr. Humphreys?"

"Chinatown. Mr. Ross and I were walking along Grant Avenue. Some toughs followed us, four or five there were—"

"Six," said Mr. Ross. "It was six of them focht us, onywey!"

"We tried to dodge 'em. They caught us on California Street, on the hill. They said, 'Are you from the *Emerald Reef?*' We said yes, we were. They said, 'Well, we're from the *Honda!*' and they went for us!"

Captain Gardiner cleared his throat and spoke from the doorway of his room.

"What's that, Mr. Humphreys?" he said. "What's that? Am I to understand these men asked if you were from the *Emerald Reef* and when you said yes, they said they were from the *Honda* and attacked you?"

"Yes, sir," said the mate. "I was going to report the whole thing to you. I'm not one to make complaints unnecessarily, but when it comes to the point where you can't take a stroll ashore at night in a civilized port without being set on by men from another ship, it's time something was done!"

The steward spoke from the companion, his head level with the captain's knees.

"They're a bad crowd, that lot, I know."

The captain frowned.

"When I want your views on the subject, Steward, I'll ask for them. Until then, kindly have the goodness to hold your tongue."

"Yes, sir," said the steward.

The captain cleared his throat once more.

"Mr. Humphreys, I want your assurance that there was, in your opinion, no reason, no cause for this attack on you! It was, I take it, as a mere matter of form I'm asking, an unprovoked attack."

"Entirely, sir. Mr. Ross and I were in Chinatown buying a few things, china and such-like!"

"Aye," said the second engineer, "twenty-five dollars I spent an' a' thrawn away. I droppit ma parcels when they set on me an' a' I bocht got broken to smithereens!"

"Yes, Mr. Ross, I dare say," said the captain. "Very unfortunate, no doubt, but the matter's more serious than the material loss you suffered. You were attacked by men from the *Honda*, without cause!"

"Aye, aboot seven o' them!"

"Five, I think," said the mate.

"Seven, I'm sure of it!"

"Well, it doesn't signify," said the mate. "What I'd like to say, though, is if it hadn't been for two of our deck-hands coming up and helping us, we'd have been in hospital by now."

"Luk at my wrist, sir!" said Mr. Ross. "It's sae stiff an' sore I'll no' be able to use it fur days!"

He extended his right hand. The wrist was red and swollen.

The chief engineer clucked his tongue but said nothing.

Captain Gardiner burst out furiously:

"Now, I tell you, all of you, I'm not the man to bear with this kind of thing in silence. I am not! An outrage on my officers reflects on me and my ship! Don't tell me those deck-hands or firemen weren't being backed up by some one in authority! They were, of course. Why should focsle hands set on officers belonging to another ship? ——it, it's not in reason."

He squared his shoulders and frowned at the faces of the men standing with him on the bridge deck.

"No, sir," said the mate. "It's not. I should say, sir, knowing the way they spoke to us and the way they tracked us, it's all part of some kind of conspiracy!"

"I can well believe it," said the captain. "The matter isn't going to be allowed to rest here, I promise you. Tomorrow I'll make it my duty to call on the *Honda's* captain and ask him if he can throw any light on his crew's conduct! The whole thing's incomprehensible. I've never heard anything more deplorable, more monstrous! Two of my officers attacked by men from another ship! I'll show them I'm not the man to take an outrage like this lying down! I'll fight this to the bitter end. You mark my words!"

Mr. Humphreys reflected that he hadn't seen the old man so worked up for years. He was right when he said he'd fight to the bitter end. He would. He was that sort.

"Mr. Humphreys," said the second engineer, "are ye coming alang to ma room fur a smoke?"

"Yes," said the mate, "why not?"

He had walked a few paces away from the door of the captain's room with Mr. Ross and the second and third mates when he heard the chief engineer call to him.

He halted, feeling uneasy. He knew in advance what the chief intended to say.

"Mr. Humphreys," said the chief, "I'd

like to have a word with you. You know my views about fighting, don't you?"

"Yes, chief, I do!"

"Well, I said nothing just now in front of the Old Man, but you've been fighting!"

"I have. If you were listening, Chief, you must have heard what I said to him."

"I heard what you said, but the point is, didn't I tell you I wudna have you running unnecessary risks and getting mixed up in waterfront scraps if you were going to marry my daughter?"

"You told me that, Chief, yes!"

Mr. Humphreys wondered why an ordinarily sensible man could be so dense, so pig-headed and obstinate. He felt himself growing hot and uneasy.

"Dinna you think I deserve an explanation?" said the chief.

"I told the captain that Mr. Ross and I were set on by some of the hands from the *Honda*. What would you have me do, turn and run? Well, Chief, I'm not built that way and if you don't like it, what do you propose to do?"

Mr. MacLennan's face was pink. His gaze hardened. Normally his tongue held few traces of Scots dialect, but when moved, as now, or roused to anger, he dropped into the speech of his boyhood on Clydeside.

"It's no' that. It's a question whether ye intend to try an' dae what I eskit ye to! I tellt ye if ye wantit to mairry Maggie ye maun show yersel' mair considerate to her feelin's, mair cautious in yer dealin's wi' ither men. I'm no' sayin' ye dinna dae yer best, Mr. Humphreys, nor that ye ha'ena tried haurd, but is that guid eneuch? Maggie maun mairry a man she can trust. Can she trust you? It's aye the same, Mr. Humphreys, ye were fechtin'! I'm no' sayin' the fault was yours—"

"But that's just what you are saying," said Mr. Humphreys.

An inner voice seemed to be warning him to go slow, to say nothing that would make things worse, to exercise tact. Nevertheless he flared into a temper.

"You say that because I fought and because all fights are on the same level, I'm in the wrong. Well, I tell you, Chief, no one who wasn't a coward could have got out of that scrap tonight and held his head up again ever! I had to fight. If the same circumstances arose tomorrow as they did tonight, I'd have to fight all over again. And the day after that as well. If you're going to find fault with me, Chief, and intend to write home to Maggie about it, then there's no more to be said."

"There's a vera great deal mair to be said," said the chief sharply. "Hoo is't ither mates dinna ha'e fechts ashore, eh, Mr. Humphreys?"

"That means you don't believe a word I said how the fight began?" said Mr. Humphreys.

"I happen to be Maggie's faither. I ha'e her interests at heart, her happiness, ye ken!"

"Listen, Chief, not even for Maggie could I have got out of that fight tonight. There, that's the solemn truth! And if you and Maggie don't approve of me and think I'm not good enough, well, that ends it! I've done my best and I'm —— if I can do any more!"

He turned on his heel and walked quickly in the direction of the second engineer's room that led out of the portside engine-room alleyway. His anger cooled suddenly. He had said too much. He felt depressed and unhappy. The chief was one of the finest men he'd ever met: even now he admired him and respected him more than he did any one else on board the ship. Yet he had quarreled with him and worked himself up into a rage over nothing. Why couldn't he have held his tongue and been reasonable?

Then there came into his mind once more the memory of the fight on California Street, and he knew he had done what was right.

Maggie would see his point of view even if Maggie's father didn't!

## IX

CHUCK MARTIN and his friend, Blooey Radkin, sat side by side on high stools at the counter of an open-all-night lunch-room and supped off plates of ham and eggs and bread and mugs of coffee.

"Best meal I've had in donkeys' years," said Chuck. He broke into chuckles of laughter. "Blooey, m' lad, is this the end of it or ain't it?"

"End o' what?" said Blooey.

"That *Honda* business!"

"Dunno. Mebbe so, mebbe not! Going ashore with you, Chuck, is not what I call a pastime for an old feller like me!" Blooey's

black hair was straight and damp on his forehead, his dark face was moist and flushed, his small dark eyes twinkled. "Never had such an evening in all my life," he said. "Tell me, Chuck, what d'you think's come over that crowd o' maniacs from the *Honda?* What they want to go fighting for, eh?"

Chuck mopped up fat on his plate with a piece of bread.

"That's what I've been trying to think out," he said presently. "No —— reason at all." He gulped down what was left of his coffee. "It's wonderful when you come to reason it out, ain't it? I'd been planning a quiet evening ashore, seeing the sights, minding me own business and so on. See! That's what I'd been planning, Blooey, you know as well as I do! And here we are, half past eleven o'clock almost, you and me, and nothing but fights and trouble ever since we left the ship!"

"We ain't spent the money we aimed to spend, did we, Chuck?"

"We ain't," said Chuck. "But we spent all we're going to spend!"

"Seems a pity," said Blooey casually. "You can't think of nothing else we can do, can you?"

"I could think of a hundred things if I give my mind to it," said Chuck. "But I'm not going to try. See! If you think I'm going moochin' round the Barbary Coast this time o' night with you, m' lad, you're off the mark! My mouth's so —— sore after what that swine did to me at Webber's I can't hardly talk. I'm sore all over and I'm —— sleepy and I'm going straight back to the ship."

Blooey whose zest for recreation was still unquenched sighed.

"All right, then, Chuck, I'm with you."

"No more fighting for this child tonight. Why, I believe, Blooey, if I was to see any o' the *Honda's* crowd now, even a small, bald-headed one, I'd dodge him. I ain't got a punch left in me!"

"Wonder what started all that trouble between them and us," said Blooey. "Eh?"

"Now, that's what you might call a mystery!" said Chuck. "What made me and that man from the *Honda* scrap, eh?"

So far back was the fight at Joe Webber's place, it took some thinking to get things sorted into their right order.

"He asked for trouble," said Chuck vaguely. "And he got it. He said things to me, Blooey, passed remarks no man's got any right to say to no one! Don't you remember?"

"I remember," said Blooey. "—— rude he was!"

Chuck was slowly recalling the evening's events in their sequence.

"That's right, too! Sat at the same table with you and me, drinking our drink, drinks we'd bought him and paid for, insulting us and the ship to our faces. No, Blooey, that man, he brought it all on his own blooming shoulders. Everything!"

Chuck felt hazy, nevertheless, when it came to details. Of one thing, however, he was sure. Never in all his long and checkered career had he fought a fight in which right was so much on his side.

"Another go of ham and eggs, Blooey?"

"If I eat another mouthful," said Blooey, "I'll be sick!"

"Let's be moving back to the ship, then," said Chuck. "And no more fighting! Understand! If any o' them swines from the *Honda* crosses our path—do you hear that, Blooey? Crosses our path is good, ain't it? —if any o' them swines crosses our path, we got to give 'em the slip! I'm not feeling up to a scrap now, honest! I'm going to turn in soon as I get aboard."

## X

THE little room at the back of Mr. Webber's store on Steuart Street was no longer crowded.

A drunken man slept with his head resting in a pool of liquor on a table in the corner. At another table Mr. Malone, the second engineer of the *Honda*, and Mr. Torrance, the third, sat and talked in low voices, as if they were afraid that some one might hear what they said, though their talk dealt with matters of no more importance or interest than the passing of coal.

"The day of the tramp steamer as we know it, Mister," said Mr. Malone, "is done. Coal's finished. Steam don't pay. All right, then, what's going to take its place?"

"Internal combustion," said Mr. Torrance. "That's what you're driving at, of course, in your fat-headed way, but there's better than that! What about ships run by wireless, eh? I've got ideas, Mr. Malone, that 'ud surprize you!"

"Nothing you'd say would surprize me! You talking about wireless don't, anyway.

No more than it would if you talked of harnessing the tides to our rotten old crank shaft! Steam's finished, that's all I know. Coal's finished as well!"

"Yes, so you've said!" Mr. Torrance, a young man with a sense of humor, chuckled. "If you've said it once, you've said it a hundred times. What's to stop us breaking away again. Sails to steam; now from steam to wireless!"

"Wireless, your grandmother!" said Mr. Malone.

Though Eddie Torrance was as usual laughing at him, he felt no resentment. Eddie was the only friend he'd ever had in his life who tolerated him and wasn't bored by him, or if he was bored, had the politeness to pretend he wasn't.

Mr. Malone was conscious of his own limitations. Too many shipmates had cursed him for his stupidity and dullness for him to have any delusions about himself. He could talk about marine engineering, the sea, whisky, tobacco, football and not much else. Young Eddie Torrance came of a good family, his folks were rich—what he wanted to go to sea for at all, no one had ever been able to find out—and he could talk about anything under the face of heaven and get away with it, whether he knew the first thing about it or not.

"Mister, it's coal keeps us afloat. Coal out, food home! Coal to the Mediterranean and South America, coal to the West Coast of Africa. Take away the coal, and take it away you must, soon as ever they get electricity in only two or three more places, and how are you going to run your ships? What are you going to carry outward bound, eh?"

"Whisky," said Mr. Torrance. "Cases of Scotch. And about time, too, m' lad! This swill we're drinking now, for instance, just consider it a minute! The Johnny that runs the joint called it Scotch! It's no more Scotch, I bet, than a Liverpool Jew in a kilt at Monte Carlo!"

Mr. Webber approached and placed one huge, gnarled hand on the table and bent his head and spoke in a husky whisper.

"You two gentlemen from the *Honda*, ain't you?"

They stared at him. His manner betokened secrecy. He glanced at the man in the corner, sound asleep.

"Needn't say if you don't want to, of course!"

Mr. Malone was suspicious. Something was wrong. Nevertheless, he would speak the truth. No harm could come if he spoke the truth.

"Yes, we're from the *Honda*!"

"Ah! Just so!"

Mr. Webber laid a leather wallet on the table with the air of a man playing a winning card.

"Now, that yere wallet," he said, still in the same husky whisper, "come from the *Honda*!"

"You don't say so," said Mr. Torrance.

"I do," said Mr. Webber. "That yere wallet come from the *Honda*!"

"I bet it walked in all by itself, too," said Mr. Torrance. "What did it ask for and what did it say when you set a glass of your special Scotch in front of it, eh?"

Mr. Webber gaped.

"Walked in all by itself!" he said. "What's wrong with you?"

"Listen to me," said Mr. Torrance, "didn't you say that wallet come from the *Honda*?"

"I certainly did say so!"

"All right, then, get on with the story. Pretty —— dull so far, Mr. Webber! Maybe it took the street car or came in a Belt Line engine! Well, have it your own way, then! How did it get here?"

"It was brought, o' course. Some one brought it!"

"I wish you'd said that before, then. You see, Mr. Webber, that's not quite fair on me! It's gone half past eleven and tomorrow's my busy day and I've got to be on deck early to see that the firemen have changed their socks. Sailing day, you see! Yet here you are, asking me riddles and making my head ache, all for no real reason!"

Mr. Webber scratched his chin with a dirty finger.

"Well," he said heavily, "as I was jus' saying—"

Mr. Malone was grinning.

"It's all right, Mr. Webber, it's that last drink he had. It's gone to his head, and he's not responsible."

"This yere wallet," said Mr. Webber, "was brought here by one o' your hands. Big feller, broad, not tall, dark hair, pale face, small features, big chin, sharp eyes, slow moving, big hands and feet, fireman!"

"Splendid!" said Mr. Torrance. "And you can tell all that just by looking at the wallet! It's marvelous! What I don't understand is how you knew he had a wart on

his nose and a mother in Yorkshire! Your name's Holmes, isn't it?"

Mr. Webber showed signs of irritation.

"I never said nothing about a wart. An' my name's not Holmes! See here, gentlemen, it's time you was getting back to your ship. One o' your fellers brought this yere wallet in with him and dropped it when he was fighting. He'd a turn up with a guy from another ship. Fought, they did, in here. Broke a chair and three glasses and cracked the table. Never see anything like it! Respectable place and they set about each other like a couple o' toughs in a sailors' boarding-house! I could of kept what was in the wallet and not had a twinge o' conscience. But that's not my way. I'm honest, I am. Honest Joe, they call me. Here's the wallet. It's got a five-dollar bill in it, a goil's photograph, some letters. I ain't read 'em, but they're letters all right, I can see crosses all over the margins—kisses, like."

"From a fireman on another ship, probably," said Mr. Torrance. "One of his old school chums! Open it and see what the blighter's name is!"

Mr. Malone opened the wallet.

"Sparrow," he said. "Edward Sparrow, S.S. *Honda!*"

"Well, well," said Mr. Torrance. "Our dear old friend Spadger! Spadger, the work-dodger! Well, well! And he had a fight, did he, and lost his five dollars? That must have brought the abdominal pains on bad, I bet! I remember once when he dropped three pennies down the bilge and couldn't find 'em he went sick for a week!" Mr. Torrance, who was feeling extraordinarily cheerful, rose to his feet and knocked on the table with his knuckles. "Ahem! Mr. Webber, on behalf of my shipmates and my ship I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You have done us a service to-night that will not easily be forgotten. I shall make it my duty, Mr. Webber, to lay your conduct in the most flattering terms before the British consul-general in this city, and request him to bring it to the notice of his Majesty's Government, London, England.

"In due course you will doubtless be rewarded with the Order of the British Empire which will pass you into all music halls, cinemas, chapels, museums, pubs and honky-tonks in Great Britain, Ulster and the Irish Free State, not to mention the overseas dominions, free of charge, on presenting sixpence, but in Canada twenty-five cents, to the man in uniform at the door! Thank you, Mr. Webber, and again, thank you!"

Mr. Torrance clapped his hands vigorously and beamed.

"Silly ass!" said Mr. Malone, grinning.

Mr. Webber smiled sourly. He had an idea that this fresh young guy was making fun of him. He didn't like being made fun of. Fellers that made fun of him generally got hurt. All the same, it was difficult to see how he could very well show he was offended. He decided to pay no attention to what had been said.

"You b'ys, you'd better be getting on back to your ship!"

## XI

ON THE forward well-deck of the *Honda* between the No. 1 hatch and the break of the forecastle head the deck-hands and stokehold-hands were gathered together, listening to Spadger who, rendered eloquent by his wrongs, talked to them huskily through swollen lips.

"I ain't much of a hand at saying what I got to say, fellers, but that crowd on the *Emerald Reef* ought to be wiped off the earth. I was having a drink peaceful when two of them come in and sit at my table. 'You from the *Honda?*' they says. 'I am,' says I, 'an' proud of it!' 'Right!' says they. 'We're from the *Emerald Reef!* Now, you know!' With that, fellers, they gets up and punches me in the jaw and flings me out of the place into the gutter on me head and kicks me, cruel hard. I got bruises all over me ribs now."

Once again Spadger told the story, as he remembered it, of his fight in Mr. Webber's.

"What's more," he said, "they stole me wallet. Twenty-five dollars I had in it. They picked me pocket. And when me an' Wally here, an' Kinlan an' Tank was having that turn up with the gang on California Street, I seen him! Sure as I'm standing here I seen him, the feller what stole my money, Chuck they call him, running away down the hill to Grant Avenue! Now, what are we going to do about it? It ain't right when a man what's done nothing to hurt no one should be set on and beat up like I been to-night. If you don't believe what I'm saying is true, look at me face!

That'll show you. Ask Tank here and Wally and Pat Kinlan! Look at the lot of us! I tell you, that crowd from the *Emerald Reef* has got it in for us. They're a bunch of savages! And to-morrer we're leaving! What are we going to do, eh?"

Having concluded the longest speech he had ever made, Spadger retreated bashfully into the alleyway that led to the forepeak between the two forecastles.

"Good on yer, Spadger," said his friends. "That's the stuff!"

"Spadger's right," said Wally Armstrong. "Spadger's right for once. All he says. I was laid out. Tank was laid out. Spadger was laid out."

Kinlan felt in danger of being forgotten.

"They'd have laid me out, too, if I'd let 'em. Strangled me pretty near. A dark, small fella with a grin on his dhirty face. If I cud git at him I'd tache him not to thry chokin' fellas! Got his two hands round me neck an' nigh sthrangled me!"

"There's a big, broad feller I want to meet," said Tank. "Feller with big, bushy eyebrows and a twisted nose, like, an' a big jaw on 'im! He's my man. You let me get at the swine!"

"Well, what are we going to do about it?" said Armstong. "Are you fellers going to let them *Emerald Reefs* get away with it? Treat us like dirt, they do, half murder us, choke us, and you don't do nothing! Call yourselves men, do you! Well, you're not. You're a pack of old ladies dressed in trousies, that's what you are. Fat-bellied old ladies, you are, with corns on your perishin' feet! —— me pink, I'd go up Market Street this minute I would an' pick up a dozen gals that 'ud make better men than the whole —— crowd aboard this ship!"

"Talk's cheap," said a voice. "What do you expect we're going to do this hour of the night, eh? Sing hymns to the *Emerald Reef's* Old Man or what?"

"That's Biddle, o' course," said Tanqueray. "Biddle, if I was you I'd be ashamed to be talking like that!"

"Yeh," said Biddle. "Mind out I don't get talking in a way you don't like!"

"Me and the others 'ad about as much as we could do to get away from that bunch o' thugs, just because we come from the *Honda!* You chaps don't care what happened because it never happened to you. But it might of! There was about eight of 'em and we was four!"

A fireman, Mears, stood on the hatch.

"Listen, fellers, cut the talking. What say we go across to the *Emerald Reef* this minute, see, the lot of us, see, and give them swines the biggest —— hiding one crew ever had from another! That'll show 'em they can't do as they like with us. It'll pay 'em for what they done to Spadger here and the rest of 'em. What's things coming to, eh, when fellers like them can take an' beat our chaps up like they was dagos or summat like that? Are you coming along, fellers, or aren't yer?"

"Course we'll come," answered the crowd. "Why the —— not!"

One or two still argued. What was the good of it? You couldn't go boarding another ship after dark and not get into trouble!

Biddle said—

"You take my advice and keep out of it!"

Spadger, hoarsely indignant, said:

"You're yeller, Biddle! Look at me face! You think what they done to me for no reason. 'You from the *Honda?*' they says, and they beat me and stole me wallet and kicked me!"

Even now, after a lapse of hours it seemed to Spadger incredible that he should have been treated with such vile brutality. What had he done? Nothing! Heaps of times when he'd done things that might have brought trouble, he'd gone free. Now when he'd been minding his own business, he'd got smashed up. That was life. Queer, which way you looked at it! No justice, nowhere! If the *Hondas* raided the *Emerald Reefs* and thrashed 'em it would serve 'em right!

"You coming, Biddle?"

Biddle was, he realized vaguely, a man of character. If Biddle held back, others might hold back, too.

"You're not a coward, Biddle, are yer?"

"I'll come," said Biddle. "Don't blame me if we get in wrong, that's all."

The hands made their way along the forward well-deck, climbed the ladder to the bridge-deck and jostled each other down the gangway to the wharf.

The second engineer and the third, who had just that moment come aboard, watched them in amazement.

"What the ——'s the matter with the crowd?" said Mr. Malone. "Firemen and deck-hands, the lot of 'em, where are they going?"

"They're up to no good, anyway," said Mr. Torrance. "I heard them saying something about smashing some one!"

Mr. MacRae, the fourth engineer, approached from the direction of the galley.

His pale face had a rapt expression that they knew only too well.

The problem that had tormented him earlier in the evening had not been solved. He was talking to himself, gazing seaward, walking with slow deliberation, hands in pockets, head bare.

*"We scooted south with a press of sail till we fetched to a caboose,
The Sailor's Rest, by Dago Tom, alongside Paddy's Goose.
Red curtains to the windies, ay, 'n' white sand to the floor,
And an old blind fiddler liltin' the tune of 'Lowlands no more.'

He played the 'Shaking of the Sheets' 'n' the couples did advance,
Bowing, stamping, curtsying, in the —"

Mr. MacRae was suddenly aware of the third, Mr. Torrance, shaking him by the arms and asking him if he was fast asleep or drunk or what.

"Me," he said, "I was wondering." Even now he was not quite sure what they were saying to him. "I was wondering how it's possible for John Masefield to write poetry, real stuff with guts in it, and swing and something not just jingles, by using words like we use here aboard ship, you and me and the hands—"

"Listen to me a minute," said Mr. Torrance. "Here, for heaven's sake, man, pull yourself together and talk sense! You've been aboard all this while, haven't you?"

"Yes, ever since I came back from buying those papers and things."

"Well, what's wrong with the hands? Where've they gone?"

"Dunno. Seems like there's been some row between them and the *Emerald Reef's* crowd. A fight or something."

"What started it?" said Mr. Malone.

"How the blazes should I know," said Mr. MacRae in sudden irritation.

"Probably the *Emerald Reef's* crowd heard you reciting some poetry and they didn't like it," said Mr. Torrance.

"Needn't try and be funny," said Mr. MacRae sharply. "That's where you spoil yourself, Mr. Torrance. Always trying to be funny."

*"*A Night at Dago Tom's*," by John Masefield.

"The mate aboard?" asked Mr. Malone.

"I think he's turned in."

"H'm," Mr. Malone grunted. "Well, he's liable to be turned out again —— quick if that gang's up to any mischief."

"I've a kind of idea," said Mr. Torrance, "the same applies to the lot of us! In fact, it's not worth while even our going to our rooms."

## XII

IN THE *Emerald Reef's* galley the night watchman dozed over the fire. Forward most of the hands were already in their bunks, some sound asleep and snoring, others smoking their pipes. Two sat at a table in the sailors' forecastle, whispering to each other, talking about the girls they had met that evening, laughing softly, hoping they might meet them again tomorrow.

Amidships the boatswain and carpenter, the cooks and the second steward and the mess-room lad were in their rooms. Aft in their quarters in the poop where the gunners had been housed in the war, the donkeyman, the storekeeper and the greaser were playing nap.

The wireless operator was reading a book in the wireless room on the lower bridge.

In the second engineer's room Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Hollick and Mr. Ovenden and Mr. Jones, the third engineer, seated on the settee and a camp stool, were watching Mr. Wilson, the young fourth engineer, brewing cocoa in six white enamel mugs.

The mugs stood on top of the bureau. The fourth had mixed the cocoa, and now poured into each mug in turn the water that had been boiling when he left the galley with the kettle.

"Stir it round," he kept saying, "or else it's no good. And help yourselves to the canned cow. If we'd had fresh milk boiled, not too much boiled, it would be better, but you've got to make the best of it."

Mr. Ross, the rightful tenant of the room, lay in his bunk, his face scarred and swollen, his right wrist bandaged.

"Mr. Wilson, ye ocht to ha'e been a chef an' no' a buddin' chief! Ye're what I ca' an expert!"

"I'm pretty good," said the fourth engineer. "When I was serving my time in the shops in Sunderland I lived in digs where the old landlady wouldn't gimme a thing to eat or drink after six o'clock in the

evening. That's how I learned, over a gas jet."

"I thought I knew the style," said Mr. Jones. "That's how I learned myself. Tea, cocoa, sausages on a fork."

"Mr. Jones, ye'll find yin o' ma wife's fruit cakes in thon lower drawer," said Mr. Ross. "Let's ha'e it. Mr. Wilson, tak' that —— kettle oot o' here. If you pit it doon onywhaur in this room an' mak' things a' dirty I'll hauf kill ye."

"Who's going to take the kettle back to the galley?" said Mr. Wilson.

"Give it me," said Mr. Ovenden.

He took the kettle and made his way out of the room through the portside engine-room alleyway out on to the bridge-deck.

When he reached the galley he paused.

From the shoreward end of the pier he heard the sound of voices and the tramp of heavy feet.

"What the ——'s that?" he said.

The night watchman stood by his side.

"Dunno, sir, seems like a crowd coming."

They moved to the starboard side of the deck.

In the light of the lamps ashore, dimmed by the white, wet sea-fog, they could see two men hurrying along the side of the dock between the big red transit shed and the water. There was a sudden yell, and more men came into sight, running.

The first two men raced up the gangway to the bridge-deck of the *Emerald Reef*.

"What the ——'s the matter?" said Mr. Ovenden.

He recognized two of the deck-hands, Martin and Radkin.

"Men from the *Honda* coming aboard." Chuck gasped.

He turned and bolted toward the forecastle, followed by Blooey.

The third mate stood at the head of the gangway.

"Get back, you men! Do you hear me?"

The men already on the gangway hesitated.

This young feller was an officer. Better go slow.

"Get on in front!" men in the rear shouted. "Get on with it, you! Knock the stiff out!"

The third mate spoke over his shoulder to the night watchman.

"Go to the second engineer's room, fetch the mate. Tell him there's a crowd of men from the *Honda* boarding us!"

The man nearest him, urged on by the pressure at his back, charged forward.

Mr. Ovenden hit him in the face. Before he could hit him again he was knocked down by a heavy blow on the point of his jaw. He was kicked by heavy boots and trodden on. He lay on his back with his knees drawn up and tried to protect his face. He wriggled over on his side and grabbed at the legs of the men plunging across him and tried to trip them.

On the forward well-deck Chuck Martin halted by the No. 1 winch and turned and faced the men from the *Honda* who came tumbling down the ladder from the bridge deck.

"Go on, Blooey!" he shouted. "Wake 'em up!"

Chuck clenched his fists and crouched. He saw that the man leading the rush was the red-headed man he had knocked out on California Street.

"You!" he said. "Again!"

He struck out with all his strength. His fist crashed against the red-headed man's nose.

And then Chuck was overwhelmed and went down, fighting and clinging to the legs of the man he had hit and thrusting hard with his shoulders.

In the sailors' forecastle Blooey had yelled a warning.

"Stir yourselves! The crowd from the *Honda's* aboard! Look alive!"

Amazed faces peered at him from the bunks.

The two men who had been talking together at the table rose to their feet.

"What's that?"

"The crowd from the *Honda!* Fighting!"

Men dropped from their bunks and grabbed their trousers and boots.

Before Blooey could reach the firemen's forecastle, two of the *Honda's* men had flung themselves on him and dragged him, kicking and plunging to free himself, onto the forward deck.

The two forecastles were full of men fighting. The lamps were smashed. The tables were broken and the benches overturned. There were shouts of anger and screams of pain and wild oaths from men whose bare feet were being crushed by heavy boots.

Some of the *Emerald Reef's* deck-hands made their escape from the darkness of the forecastle onto the forward deck where the

shore lights and the moon, though hidden by the fog, made it possible to see what was happening.

The unexpectedness of their onslaught, the surprize, the darkness of the forecastles, added to the feeling that they were in the right and were only paying the *Emerald Reef's* crowd back for what they had done, gave the men from the *Honda* an advantage.

Though Tank and Wally Armstrong and Pat Kinlan had led the first attack, it was Biddle, the big fireman, the man who had argued against boarding the *Emerald Reef*, who had by sheer fighting ability and strength of muscle become the most prominent of all the men fighting on the forward well-deck. His big fists battered down his opponents. He endured punishment that would have finished off any man less capable of looking after himself, less powerful of frame and muscle. He encouraged the men from his own ship with a flow of curses.

Spadger, who had already been forced into two fights against his will, skirmished on the outskirts of the mêlée. It was not, he told himself, that he was a coward. No one was more willing to risk his skin than he was. But now, fighting no longer appealed to him. His one thought was to find the man who had stolen his wallet.

Biddle's big voice roared out:

"Come on, *Hondas*, clear them rats out the fo'c's'les! Clear 'em out and let me have 'em!"

He stood at the break of the forecastle head, dealing out terrific punches, left and right, bareheaded, his shirt hanging in rags around his huge shoulders, his bare skin showing white against the shadows.

Some one shouted:

"Look out, *Hondas!* Here's more o' the swine!"

Biddle laughed and drove his fist hard into the ribs of a man flung at him.

"The more the better! Send 'em along! I'm ready for 'em!"

The boatswain and the carpenter and the cook of the *Emerald Reef* were already fighting on the forward deck. There was no stopping to ask questions. Explanations could keep. They fought because, like the hands, they must fight or be thrashed.

The donkeyman, the storekeeper and the greaser, aroused from their cards in the poop, arrived at a run.

The donkeyman, a wizened, tough old Yorkshireman, armed with a pick handle, came on three men rolling over each other on the deck, heaving and kicking and hitting.

He stood, peering down at the tangle, waiting for a chance to use his pick handle. And then he heard the man who was under the other two curse them and their mothers, and recognized Chuck Martin's voice. He grabbed one of the *Honda's* men by the hair and hauled.

"Leggo, blast you!" the man yelled.

The donkeyman whacked him over the head with his pick handle and, as he dropped, kicked him.

"Lay there, you scum!"

Chuck wriggled free from the other man's arms and, on his knees, began to punch him.

The man uttered a muffled screech—

"——, you've killed me!"

He crawled away, moaning.

The donkeyman dropped the end of his pick handle on the back of his neck.

"Lay there, or I'll put you over the side."

Chuck rose to his feet stiffly. For a moment he rested against the bulwark rail, breathing deep breaths of air.

"Thank you, donkey," he said. "I'll do the same for you some day. I'm much obliged!"

The donkeyman limped off in search of another victim for his pick handle.

Chuck made for the No. 1 hatch, where the fight seemed fiercest.

He now had one ambition—to tackle the big man from the *Honda* who seemed the leader and fight him single-handed and put him out.

He was tired and sore, the knuckles of his right hand were skinned and bleeding, but he would do his best.

If he could give the big man from the *Honda* a thrashing it would be doing something to even things off. He would feel that his evening had not quite been spoiled.

## XIII

AT THE break of the bridge-deck Captain Gardiner, in his pajamas and bath wrap and slippers, was shouting for the mate.

"Mr. Humphreys, what the ——'s all this fighting about?"

Mr. MacLennan, who had stayed in his room long nough to put on some clothes,

stood by his side. He said nothing, but smiled grimly. The scene on the forward well-deck, the groups of men fighting each other, the shore lights and the moon shining through the thick white fog, the obscurity of the break of the forecastle head where the main body of the invaders seemed to be gathered together, appealed to his sense of irony.

Civilized humanity, he thought. Why should these men who would have indignantly denied they were heathen fight like heathen? It was incredible! They fought, and for what purpose? To kill? Presumably not. To maim each other? No. Why, then? What were they fighting for? They did not know! If they were to be asked, this minute, why they were fighting, they would not know!

The mate appeared at the foot of the ladder.

"As far as I can make out, sir, it's all part of what I was telling you about. The crew of the *Honda* have boarded us and are fighting our men for'ard!"

"They are, are they?" said Captain Gardiner fiercely. "Indeed! Where's the second mate?"

"I'm here, sir."

"Go to the *Honda* at once, Mr. Hollick, and tell some one who's got some kind of authority, if you can find any one who has, to come here and fetch their —— crowd back to their own ship before there's murder done! Tell them this isn't going to be the end of the matter, either. I'll lay a complaint before the consul tomorrow first thing. Tell them that. And make haste! Mr. Humphreys, I'm going to slip a pair of trousers on and then I'll come for'ard and lend a hand."

"Captain Gardiner, it's not for me to interfere with your plans," said the chief engineer, "but if you'll take my advice you'll do nothing of the kind! If there's going to be an inquiry into this, you dinna want any one to say ye were seen taking part in the fight."

"The chief's right, sir," said Mr. Humphreys. "You'd better keep out of it. But I'm different." His lips twisted into a grin as he glanced at the chief's grim countenance. "I'm going to clear that for'ard deck, somehow. Is that you, Mr. Ovenden? How are you feeling? Better. Good. I'll want you, then. And you, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Wilson. Come on, we've got to get things straightened out! Some of our fellows have been hurt!"

Chuck Martin and Biddle, the *Honda's* big fireman, fought in the midst of other fights in the space between the break of the forecastle head and the No. 1 hatch.

It was difficult to see clearly or judge distance. Footwork was out of the question. To endeavor to guard, a waste of time. The man who could hit the harder, the man who had most luck in getting his blows home first, won.

And so they stood close up to each other, closer than was convenient for inflicting real damage, and punched, blow for blow, while other men fighting around them collided with them and jostled them and threw them off their balance and jammed them against the hatch coaming and in many other ways worried them and took their minds off the supreme business of life which was to fight to a finish, somehow.

"See those two men!" said Mr. Humphreys. "Those are the two we've got to make for!"

Along the dockside there came with Mr. Hollick, Mr. Pett, the mate of the *Honda*, Mr. Hargreaves, the second, Mr. Moodie, the third, Mr. Malone, the second engineer and Mr. Torrance, the third. With them came the *Honda's* donkeyman, the boatswain and carpenter.

Captain Gardiner emerged from the starboard door of his room as they reached the bridge-deck of the *Emerald Reef*. He had been about to change into uniform and had already taken off his bath wrap and placed his uniform cap on his head.

"Is the first officer of the *Honda* here?" he barked.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Pett.

A gruff, irascible little man, soured by long years of waiting for promotion, he had been about to apologize, to say he was sorry the crew of the *Honda* should have boarded another ship at this time of night and he would do his best to get them away at once. But all his good intentions, founded on a deep-set feeling that his own men were in the wrong, were scattered when Captain Gardiner, this big-bellied, heavy-set bullock of a man in the ridiculously striped pajamas and the silly cap on his bald head blared at him in a foghorn voice.

"Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Why the —— can't you exercise some

sort of control over your —— hands? All night long they've been picking on my men and fighting them! You'll hear more of this, sir! A pack of lousey hooligans board my ship and set about my men. By ——, it's monstrous! A pack of hooligans! If that's the sort of discipline you encourage, no wonder your —— ship's a disgrace to the service! Perhaps you'll have the goodness to try and induce them to go back to their own ship! They won't listen to you, naturally, but you'll do me the favor of making the attempt!"

Mr. Pett stood his ground.

"It was your own crowd that started it, Captain Gardiner. I know their reputation in San Francisco, just as I know yours. My men wouldn't have touched them, I can tell you that, if yours hadn't given them cause." He spoke to the group who stood with him outside the door of the captain's room. "Come on, let's get this mess cleared up! Their own after-guard couldn't. We must."

Captain Gardiner was hot with anger. He would have retorted sharply. He would have told this little nincompoop what kind of man he was. Common sense warned him to hold his tongue. His temper might get the better of him once again, as it often had done before.

And then he realized with a start that one of the men who had come aboard with the mate of the *Honda* had not yet gone forward, but was watching him. A young man with a fresh-colored face and sleepy eyes, half closed, and a thin mouth, stood in front of him, grinning.

"Who are you?" said Captain Gardiner. "What do you want?"

"I'm third engineer of the *Honda*. Torrance is my name. My mother's maiden name was Alexander. No relation to the Great, of course. Perhaps my family affairs don't interest you. I was just admiring before I go into action, as we used to say in the big war—not this one, the last—I was just admiring the cut of your pajamas! I can go for'ard with a light heart. I was feeling a bit hipped, but after seeing those pajamas, sir—well, the worst has happened and I'm still alive! Good-by, sir! Mind the arteries! At your age, you know, and after that heavy meal you had at Tait's and the boot-leg, well, you've simply got to be careful, haven't you?"

Mr. Torrance ran forward, chuckling, and plunged into the chaos eddying around the hatches on the forward well deck.

## XIV

A WHISTLE shrilled. Mr. Pett's hoarse voice could be heard above the noise of the fight.

"All men from the *Honda*, get back to their own ship! Do you hear?"

"Go to blazes, you little squirt," said a voice from the break of the forecastle.

"Who said that?" shouted Mr. Pett. "If I lay hands on the man who said that, I'll break his neck."

"You're welcome," said Mr. Ovenden. "That's one of your own men! Go to it!"

"Don't you talk to me like that," said Mr. Pett, "or you'll be sorry!"

"My heaven," said Mr. Humphreys, pulling one man off another, "can't you cut out that —— squabbling and gimme a hand?"

Between the No. 1 hatch and the break of the forecastle head, Chuck Martin and Biddle were locked tight in each other's arms, exhausted, bleeding, incapable of inflicting further damage on each other, but still willing to fight.

"Biddle," said Mr. Pett, "stop fighting! Do you hear!"

"Martin," said Mr. Humphreys, "drop your hands this minute!"

Mr. Pett grabbed hold of Biddle.

"Here, Mister, help me haul 'em apart!"

Mr. Humphreys gripped Chuck by the elbows and tugged.

The two men were separated.

"If you people had been half awake this wouldn't have happened," said Mr. Pett sourly.

Some one had hit him in the jaw and he was furious.

"Talk sense," said Mr. Humphreys. "How could we stop it? Your crowd set on me and the second engineer in Chinatown, and then they board us and start knocking our fellows about and you have the nerve to say we're to blame."

"It was the *Honda* crowd started the whole business," said Chuck Martin. "All night they been givin' us ——! But they ain't succeeded!" He scowled at Biddle. "You, you big stiff, you thought you could gouge me, didn't you? Well, you couldn't. If you'd gone on, I'd have bit your windpipe, I would!"

Spadger, who had spent the last ten

minutes in the angle of the deck between the starboard forecastle ladder and the scuppers, gave a sudden shout.

"You, Chuck, you're the swine what stole me wallet! Where is it?"

"Stole your how-much?"

Chuck, limp and exhausted, turned on him.

Before he knew what was happening Spadger, comparatively fresh but roused beyond endurance, hit him in the eye.

"You liar," he roared. "You stole me wallet."

"Did you see that?" said Mr. Jones furiously. "Did you?"

He rushed at Spadger and uppercut him.

Spadger staggered back and sprawled full length, groaning.

"What the —— did you want to do that for?"

Mr. Malone, the second engineer of the *Honda*, caught Mr. Jones by the shoulders and forced him back across the hatch.

"I'll kill you, you —— interferin' louse! I'll kill you."

Mr. Jones struggled to free himself.

The third mate, Mr. Ovenden, bewildered at the succession of disasters that had befallen his ship, dragged the second engineer of the *Honda* away.

Mr. Malone turned, snarling, and punched wildly and missed.

Mr. Ovenden, thoroughly amused, laughed and rammed his left shoulder into his chest and hit him hard in the body with his right.

Mr. Malone grunted and collapsed on the deck.

The third engineer of the *Honda*, Mr. Torrance, serious at last, stepped in front of his friend.

"That'll do," he said quietly. "You swine have done mischief enough for one night. You'll do no more!"

He moved swiftly and slammed his left fist into Mr. Ovenden's face and his right into his body.

Chuck Martin, bleeding from a cut over his eye, uttered a loud yell and, before any one could stop him, charged at Mr. Torrance and, with a fierce drive with his right, knocked him down. He fell with a crash, his head hit against the steam-pipe casing, and he lay very still, huddled up, his hands covering his face.

Mr. Humphreys ran across the No. 1 hatch from the other side of the deck where the fighting mass of men had degenerated into groups of men scowling at each other and cursing and telling each other what they would do if any one laid so much as a finger on 'em, and seized Chuck by the arm.

"In to the focsle, you, Martin, do you hear! Get away off the deck this instant or I'll clap you in irons, you —— fool, and keep you there till we sail! Do you hear me, —— you! Then get out o' here!"

The injustice of it filled Chuck with bitterness. To be spoken to like that after all he had done.

He turned away, dejected and forlorn, and went into the dark and broken forecastle.

The fight was at an end.

The *Honda's* hands were making their way aft toward the bridge-deck and the gangway.

Mears, the fireman, whose suggestion it had been to board the *Emerald Reef*, was discovered by Biddle slinking down the ladder from the forecastle head.

"You've been hiding there, Mears, ain't you?" he said. "Well, you'll pay for that, you —— coward! You wait!"

"I ain't been hiding!" said Mears. "Me and another man, we been scrapping there by ourselves."

Mr. Torrance lay where he had fallen.

Mr. Malone was on his knees by his side, holding his head in his hands.

"He's bleeding a lot," he said. "Can some one fetch some dressings or something?"

"Mr. Jones has gone," said Mr. Hollick.

"I hope he's not badly hurt," said Mr. Humphreys.

"You'll have to answer for it if he is," said Mr. Pett harshly.

"*We* will?" Mr. Humphreys lost his temper for the second time that night. "What the —— do you mean? I've told you before, you —— fool, your crowd have done their best to smash us up! What ship are you aboard now? Ours, not yours! So keep your —— mouth shut, Mister, or there'll be more trouble started."

"I'm ready," said the mate of the *Honda* heavily. "I'm ready, Mister!"

Captain Gardiner, fully dressed, approached.

"Mr. Humphreys, I'd be obliged if you'd kindly refrain from brawling! Why are these men from the *Honda* still aboard my ship?" He spoke to Mr. Pett. "Are you going, or do you want me to send for the police?"

"There's a man hurt," said Mr. MacLennan. He, too, was on his knees. "Aye, the back of his head's been split open against the steam-pipe casing! He's losing blood fast! Where's Mr. Jones and those dressings?"

Captain Gardiner pressed the button of his torch and saw on the deck the young man who had laughed at his pajamas. He was not a vindictive man. He could say that, honestly, sincerely, and thank God for it. But he felt to an extent it was poetic justice that the only man to be hurt, so far as he knew, at any rate, was the man who had laughed at his pajamas.

In the forecastle Chuck had lighted the lamp.

He sat in his bunk and surveyed the damage through his one sound eye, and laughed grimly at the men who entered, one after the other.

Their battered faces expressed their amazement.

Why had the men from the *Honda* boarded them? What was the cause of it?

Did Chuck know?

"Chuck, tell us, what were you doing tonight? You and Blooey Radkin?"

"S'elp me," said Chuck piously, "not a —— thing!" He lay back and laughed feebly. "Gosh! I'm so bruised and I'm so sore, if I wasn't a —— deck-hand aboard a bloody old tramp I'd be taken to a —— hospital."

But though Chuck Martin wasn't taken to hospital, Mr. Torrance was.

## XV

DEEP down in his heart Captain Gardiner knew that he was unpopular. He wanted friends. He had no friends. He did not know how to set about making friends. The knowledge that he was not liked by any one made him suspicious and shy. He had, he realized mournfully, a belligerent, hostile manner that made strangers set him down at sight as a bully. Whereas, in reality, he was merely afraid they would undervalue him unless he asserted himself.

He often thought that even his wife regarded him with a kind of awe. Annie loved him, of course. She must. He argued fiercely against the suggestion that it was fear of him that made her so ready to agree with him, to laugh at his stories, to anticipate his wants. Yet there were times when he felt that with him she was always on her guard, always apprehensive, while with other people, acquaintances, she appeared to be more at her ease, more natural. He did not know why this should be. No man could have tried harder than he had to deserve his wife's affection and respect and confidence. Life would have been easier if Annie had sometimes contradicted him and argued with him and been cross, like other women whose husbands envied him because of her tractability and sweetness of disposition and quiet ways.

Mr. MacLennan, the chief engineer, who passed as a friend on board, merely tolerated him, he was certain. But for no other reason, he was equally certain, than that he pitied him. Mac was not the man to flatter one or be obsequious or subservient because it was to his advantage to keep in with a superior. And as far as that went, was the master of a ship really the chief engineer's superior? For the time being, undoubtedly! But if in the years to come the chief engineer became the firm's superintendent, who was the superior then? The answer to the problem was obvious.

Although he deliberately adopted the pose of a gruff, overbearing old shipmaster of the old school, one who rode roughshod over other men's opinions, Captain Gardiner was quite sincere in his attachment to the vessel he commanded.

It had shocked him to the depths of his being that men from another ship should have boarded the *Emerald Reef* and attacked his crew. Such an outrage was in his experience of the sea unheard of, even in the old lawless windjammer days when, as a young second mate, he had made voyage after voyage home around Cape Stiff with grain from San Francisco, when California was California, the real West, and not—so he felt, looking back sadly on his dead youth—not a mere degenerate imitation of the East, the Yankee East which he had never liked—again his youthful prejudices lingered—the Yankee East with all its blatant progressiveness transported to the West.

All that was unchanged since the golden age of sail was the bay, the Golden Gate with the sunsets unmatched the wide world over, the purple and blue mountains of Contra Costa, Tamalpais, the salt sea breeze, the clear skies, the stars at night and the beauty that not even the twentieth century and

steam and electricity had ruined. Even the city was different. San Francisco was a place of sadness where the memory of things that had gone was more vivid than the actuality of things that were.

And now, when almost a quarter of the twentieth century had passed, the greatest outrage of his seafaring life had come upon him. His ship, something that should be, he reflected, as sacred to a man as the woman he loved, his ship, even an old tramp steamer and not the clipper of his dreams that he had never commanded, had been boarded at midnight by men from another ship, with the encouragement, or if not actual encouragement, with the tacit support of their officers.

Tingling with indignation, determined to obtain redress, ready to fight for his rights and the rights of his crew, Captain Gardiner went on board the *Honda* directly he had swallowed a mouthful of breakfast.

He made his way up the gangway and stood for a moment on the bridge-deck, gazing about him calmly, waiting for some one to come to him and ask his business. He observed with interest that most of the hands he saw bore on their faces marks of the damage they had received in the fight.

A young officer, the second mate, he observed from the rings on his sleeve, appeared in the entrance to the saloon alleyway and stared at him sourly.

"I wish to see Captain Pennell," said Captain Gardiner.

"Captain Pennell is in his room," said the second mate. He added, half-heartedly, "Sir."

Captain Gardiner smiled grimly and climbed the ladder to the lower bridge and knocked at the door of the captain's room.

"Come in," said a harsh voice.

Captain Gardiner entered and found himself in the presence of the man whom at that moment he disliked more than any man in the world.

Captain Pennell, smaller by some six inches, very straight and stiff, quick in his movements, jerky in speech, with a narrow, pointed face, hard, bright eyes, sharp nose, thin mouth and pointed chin, rose from the chair where he had been seated at his desk.

"Ah, Captain Gardiner, I was expecting you!"

From the way he spoke, Captain Gardiner knew that the interview before him would not be pleasant. He could expect no sympathy for his point of view here.

Captain Gardiner closed the door after him and advanced, confident of the strength of his cause. Before he could utter a word Captain Pennell burst out at him furiously.

"Have you come to apologize or haven't you? If you have, get busy! If you haven't, you can —— well spare yourself the trouble of saying a word to me! I'm not going to stand any tongue-lashing from you! Do you understand? You may bully some men but you can't try that kind of thing on with me! I tell you right now—" Captain Pennell was fond of Americanisms; Captain Gardiner reflected and wondered why—"I tell you right now, I'm not going to stand for the kind of thing that's been going on the past few days. Your men knocked out my third engineer last night. You knew, I dare say, he had to be taken to hospital. I have a report from the doctor here now. He's bad. Do you know what that means? If he dies, I guess there's going to be some one had up for murder!"

Captain Gardiner who had listened in a state of pent-up fury banged his big fist down on the corner of Captain Pennell's table and bellowed:

"What do you mean by talking to me like that, eh? What do you mean by it?"

Captain Pennell glared at him but did not retreat.

"You men boarded my ship last night at midnight, twenty of them, more, perhaps, and attacked my crew when they were in their bunks. Do you think I'm going to take that kind of thing lying down? What do you reckon I'm to do? Support you against my men! You're in the wrong, of course! If twenty third engineers had been hurt, my men wouldn't be held to blame, not in any court of law in any country under the sun! What's more, if it comes to making personal complaints, my mate and my second engineer were set on last night by a gang of your hands in Chinatown! Perhaps they've not mentioned that to you. They wouldn't! The mate's nose is broken, he's likely to carry the marks to his dying day. The second engineer's had teeth knocked out and his wrist is sprained. How do you think he'll be able to manage his work in the engine-room?"

"I don't think anything about it," said Captain Pennell. "I don't have to. I've worries enough of my own. I'll be sailing

at three o'clock this afternoon without a third engineer! It's no use your telling me fairy tales about your men being set on. That's the version they've taken —— good care to feed you, of course. They would! I know my men and I trust them. I know them better than you know yours."

"Poppycock!" said Captain Gardiner. "Pennell, talk's the last refuge of a man who's in the wrong! You've had the first say, I'll have the last. I tell you straight, you're a —— inefficient master if you can't keep your crew in order better than you do!"

"Get off my ship!" Captain Pennell said hoarsely. "Get off, before I order the bosun to throw you off!"

"Throw me off, did you say!"

"I did, you old bully! I'm going to fight this affair to a finish! My men didn't start the trouble; yours did. I've got evidence from one of my firemen that your men set on him last night, beat him up, left him senseless and stole his wallet with all his money into the bargain. If you countenance that kind of thing, it's only what I might expect of you. Now, get off my ship at once!"

"If one of my men and one of yours had a row, is that any reason why half a dozen of them should beat up my mate and my second engineer?"

"I'll have no more argument, Captain Gardiner. The less I see of you before we meet in a court of justice the better. You're the type of man I'd always avoid if I could suit my comfort and convenience. And while I'm at it, I'll tell you to your face, you're one of those men that have brought so much discredit on their country! What kind of opinion do you expect foreigners to have of us if they see you and hear you and get to know your habits and are told you're a typical product of the old country? Faw! You make me sick."

Captain Gardiner, goaded beyond endurance, advanced swiftly and caught hold of the smaller man by the arms and shook him fiercely.

"You contemptible little hound," he said. "You start any of your —— games with me and I'll teach you a lesson you won't forget! I'll smash you for this, Pennell, you mark my words, I'll—"

The door opened and the *Honda's* steward, a fat, red-faced man in white jacket and check trousers and slippers, shuffled into the room.

## XVI

CAPTAIN GARDINER released his hold on Captain Pennell. His rage ebbed. He had, he realized, once more allowed his temper to put him in the wrong.

Captain Pennell smiled coldly as he adjusted his collar and tie.

"Steward, you're a witness that this man assaulted me!"

"Yes sir, I am. I seen him trying to throw you on the ground, sir."

Captain Gardiner snorted.

"There wouldn't have been much trying about it, if I'd wanted to," he said.

"I'll have the law on you for this, Gardiner," said Captain Pennell. "Make no mistake! You've laid hands on the wrong man."

"Aye, and I'll have the law on you, Pennell, and I'll beat you. I'm going to the British consul-general's at once!"

"Much good will it do you! I'm going first to a lawyer and then to the chief of police! If there's any law in the State of California, you'll bitterly regret that you ever came on board my ship to try and bully me."

"I'll bitterly regret, maybe, I didn't thrash you," said Captain Gardiner heavily. "You're a smart little man, Pennell, I dare say, but let me tell you this, you've done your best to make me feel my men are in the wrong, and you've not succeeded. I've right on my side. Stick that in your —— pipe and smoke it!"

He turned abruptly, opened the door and stepped out on to the lower bridge.

Mears, the fireman, stood at the door of the fiddley. He scowled as he watched Captain Gardiner descend the ladder on to the bridge deck.

"What you looking at, Mears?" said Spadger from the fiddley grating. "Trying to think up more stories of how well you fought last night and how many men you licked! You're a bloody coward, Mears, for all your talk."

Mears ignored Spadger's attack on his reputation.

"Do you see him?" he said. "That feller's the *Emerald Reef's* Old Man. You wait, Spadger, my lad, and see what 'appens to him!"

He showed on the palm of his grimy hand an inch and a half steel nut.

Spadger, always a little slow to grasp things, said—

"You ain't going to throw that at him, are yer?"

"No, I'm going to put it in his stocking next Christmas!"

Captain Gardiner walked slowly down the gangway. He stood on the dockside for a moment and pretended to refer to something in a note book. Then he glanced defiantly toward the *Honda's* lower bridge where Captain Pennell and the steward stood, gazing at him.

He laughed and turned away.

"You watch, Spadger," said Mears. He flung the steel nut.

There was a sudden, sharp, stabbing pain at the back of Captain Gardiner's neck. He staggered and dropped forward onto his hands and knees. He rose immediately, bare-headed, and put his hands to the wound.

From the deck of the *Honda*, now crowded with spectators, a red smear of blood was visible.

Two stevedores had hold of him.

"Anything wrong?" said one.

"Guess some one threw something," said the other.

"Yes," said Captain Gardiner, "some one threw something. My neck's bleeding. I'll have to go to a doctor." He tucked his handkerchief inside his collar. "Does that cover the cut?"

"See this?" said one of the men. He stooped and picked up a steel nut. "This was what hit you, I bet!"

"Yes," said Captain Gardiner, "that's what hit me! I'll take it with me, if you don't mind."

He put on his hat once more and walked slowly away.

On the bridge-deck of the *Honda* Captain Pennell was storming at Mears, the fireman.

"What the —— did you mean by that?" he said. "Don't you understand, you lunatic, you've put us in the wrong completely? What did you mean by it, eh?"

"I done what was right," said Mears. "Last night their crowd set on us fellers."

"It doesn't matter a —— what their crowd did! You've cut his neck open. How can I go to the police about last night now? I tell you, I'm just about sick and tired of having to deal with morons like you! You'd spoil heaven, you would, soon as you got there with your —— interfering! Why the blazes can't you mind your own —— business and not do what you've no right to do?"

He turned and walked back to the lower bridge.

Mears, his self-respect restored, grinned amiably.

Mr. Forester, the chief engineer, an elderly, bearded man, said:

"The captain's right. Why can't you have more sense, doing things like that?"

Mears continued to grin.

"And right out in the open where people can see you!" said Mr. Pett, the truculent mate. "Didn't you realize, you juggins, you've done the very thing the captain of the *Emerald Reef* wanted you to?"

"You'd better get down below and turn to and do some work," said the chief engineer.

As Mears climbed down the fiddley-ladder to the stokehold he stopped and began to laugh.

Spadger, who was following him, called down:

"What's keeping yer?"

"They're jealous, that's what it is. There ain't one of 'em but what would have liked to have thought of throwing that nut. You fellers said I 'adn't done nothing last night. I 'ave today, anyway!"

Though the captain of the *Honda* was furious, the hands were delighted.

Old Mears had just about laid the *Emerald Reef's* Old Man out. Serve the swine right! Good old Mears! He wasn't so bad as they'd thought!

## XVII

MR. MACLENNAN, the chief engineer of the *Emerald Reef*, rested his arms on the rail amidships and stared blindly at the wharf and pondered.

Life was, for the moment, a monstrous business in which he and all other mortals were entangled against their wills.

To be a free agent was impossible. Chance alone determined one's future. Right and wrong were terms that had no real meaning. One did one's best. Alone, one might have achieved a degree of merit—the influence of other men, the lives of other men, their deeds, their occupations and their pleasures, their mistakes, the mistakes of hundreds of other men, bound one

down, determined one's course, influenced one, brought one to ruin, disaster, or possibly, in rare instances, to success, as success was measured.

Mr. MacLennan felt at the back of all this groping for what might be considered the riddle of existence an unfaithfulness to an ideal. But it was difficult now, with the memory of the fight on the forward well-deck vivid in his mind, to think of mankind as being what mankind pretended it was, free and decent and clean and eager to do what was right.

Mankind, represented by the men of the *Honda* and the *Emerald Reef*, was vile.

But that again was wrong. Not vile. No! He was vile himself if he thought that.

Didn't he understand that men didn't want to be mean and cruel and drunken and lascivious? Hadn't he the sense to know that tramp steamer deck-hands and firemen were what civilization had made of them? They meant no harm. They were, in the main, men who craved for relaxation, comfort, rest, after hard weeks at sea. What was life in the stokehold of a tramp steamer in North Atlantic winter weather for firemen shoveling coal into the furnaces, with men like himself and the second forever at them?

"Steam's dropping! What the —— are you men playing at? Step lively now or there's going to be trouble."

His job, of course. It wasn't pleasant, but it was pleasanter than theirs, a —— sight!

But what did life really mean to the stokehold hands, rolling across the Westward, day after day, flooded out forward, perhaps, the galley awash, food uneatable, the ship down by the stern, likely to sink if pooped. What were their ideas on things? Had they ideas?

Queer, though, when you came to think of it, the men's unions might talk of conditions of service and pay and hours of work and hard-case, man-driving engineers, but they couldn't control the Western Ocean. What could the unions do to the old Atlantic?

But no wonder the hands craved for happiness when they reached port again! And happiness was what? Booze, in so many cases. Booze—filthy, soul-destroying, body-destroying, sense-destroying liquor. And the companionship of women—harlots, the drabs of Sailortown!

Were well brought-up, decent, self-respecting young women like his Maggie going to look at half drunk firemen just off a voyage? Not they. Why should they? They left the poor, ——, half drunk firemen to the harlots who made them happy—happy! ——! Robbed them of all they had and lied to them and then when their money was spent dropped them for other, more prosperous men and sent them back to their slums of forecastles rotten with the diseases they'd given them! And at sea once more you'd hear some poor, half sober boy say to a pal:

"Oh, ——! To be ashore again with the girls and the drink and the lights!"

Poor, miserable humans trying to be happy!

Mr. MacLennan heard footsteps approaching him and turned his head.

The mate, his face bruised and cut, a lint and plaster bandage over the bridge of his nose, and his expression unusually grim, passed him without a word.

The chief watched him stop and speak to the boatswain.

He and Dan Humphreys were no longer friends, and all due to the feud between the *Emerald Reef* and the *Honda*. He was sorry. Nevertheless, he was right. He realized now, in the light of after events, that the fight on California Street when the mate and Mr. Ross had fought the *Honda's* men had been one of those fights from which it would have been impossible to escape without loss of honor. Had the mate turned and run for it, what chance would he have had of keeping the respect of his own men afterward? They'd have despised him, set him down as a coward, made fun of him, and who could have blamed them?

All the same, and this was the part that rankled in the chief's mind, Dan Humphreys had lost his temper with him. He had spoken as no man should speak to an older man, putting aside the fact that the older man was Maggie's father. Technically, no doubt, Dan was in the right. Morally, he was in the wrong. He had been badly marked, never perhaps would he be quite the same in appearance, but he had spoken of the way he and Mr. Ross had fought with a zest that no man who really hated fighting could have spoken. Nothing he had said, so Mr. MacLennan reflected, need he take back or modify. Before Dan could marry Maggie he would have to reform.

Maggie would be on Dan's side, of course. Not a bad thing, in one respect, for a girl to believe in the man she loved, but not a bad thing, either, that she should have a father who was level-headed enough to realize that there could be no happiness in marriage with a husband who plunged light-heartedly into any adventure that came to him, however hazardous.

The second mate, Mr. Hollick, came whistling blithely along the deck.

"Hullo, chief," he said. He stopped and leaned on the rail by his side. "Bit of a scrap that, last night, wasn't it?"

"A bit of a scrap, Mr. Hollick, aye. And what started it?"

"That's what nobody seems to know."

"No," said the chief, "and nobody ever will. Did those men from the *Honda* hate our fellows? They did. But what for? They don't know. Ask them. They won't be able to give you an answer. If half the *Honda's* crowd had been changed over to the *Emerald Reef* and half our crowd to the *Honda*, they'd have been just as eager to fight as they were last night."

"If you ask my opinion, Chief, I'd say the *Honda's* crowd are no good. That's what my old mother said when I told her I was going to be a sailor. 'Sailors are bad men,' she said. Sometimes I think she's about right."

"They're not bad, Mr. Hollick. They're human beings, that's all. If you could trace last night's events back to the starting point, you'd find something very small, very insignificant, maybe, the cause of everything. A man with a headache, perhaps, or the colic, takes a drink—a drink too much—and gets drunk and mixed up in a fight with another man, perhaps a man from another ship, and one thing leads to another till you get forty men fighting at midnight on the for'ard well-deck yonder. And the real cause? Well, the cause ye can pit doon as hooch or colic or something that's no' quite fresh cooked up in the hash or bad temper, jist pure bile! Wi' the result that that puir lad, the third engineer o' the *Honda*, gangs to hospital wi', so they tell me, concussion! It's a queer auld world, Mr. Hollick, and that's the only conclusion ye can come to."

From the galley there came the sound of Chuck Martin's voice.

"Listen, fellers, they say the Old Man went aboard the *Honda* just now and got laid out! What about that, eh?"

The chief engineer and the second mate turned.

Chuck was standing at the door of the galley, talking to the cook and the steward and the mess-room lad and the carpenter.

"I've a —— good mind to go along the wharf to where the *Honda's* layin' and ask is it true?"

Mr. Humphreys appeared, walking quickly, the boatswain, looking subdued, at his heels.

"You'll do no such thing," he said gruffly. "You'll stay where you are, aboard ship! Who told you the captain was laid out?"

"One of the cargomen, sir."

"If he was laid out, he'd have been brought aboard. And what the —— do you want, hanging around the galley all morning? Haven't you any work to do? Bosun, isn't there any work for Martin to do?"

"Aye," said the bosun, "there's work and to spare. Martin, if you're not aft in two shakes with the rest of the hands, painting, you'll find me harder to tackle than all them stiffs what ever come over 'ere from the *Honda!* Jump, d'you hear?"

Chuck Martin stalked off, growling to himself.

The chief engineer said:

"Cause and effect. Whaur's it gaun to end? What's gaun to happen next?"

## XVIII

MR. MALONE, the second engineer of the *Honda*, sat on the settee in his room next the engineer's mess room, his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands.

The one friend he had in the world, a friend so immeasurably his superior that it seemed incredible he should even tolerate one so dull as he was, was in hospital badly hurt, dying, perhaps; perhaps dead.

Why should poor Eddie Torrance, who had never done any one any harm in his life, have been the only one of the crowd hurt? It was all so —— unfair, so unnecessary and stupid! Why the —— couldn't men behave like sensible human beings and not go fighting and brawling for no reason? Eddie hadn't been fighting. He'd gone aboard the *Emerald Reef* unwillingly, against his inclinations, from a sense of duty, to support the mate.

Only since the fight on the *Emerald Reef*

had Mr. Malone realized how much Eddie Torrance meant to him.

He had ridden in the ambulance to the hospital in the middle of the night and had waited in a corridor to hear the doctor's verdict—would he live or die. And he had returned to the ship at dawn. And now he must stay on board till they sailed, and they sailed at three o'clock, and Eddie Torrance would be left behind in San Francisco and what would he do without him for the rest of the trip?

The mates, no worse and no better than the usual run of mates one found aboard ship, kept to themselves, more or less. The chief engineer was liverish always after the second day out and surly and irritable and apt to pick on a man for no cause. The fourth engineer, little MacRae, was impossible always.

It had been a comfort, Mr. Malone reflected, to have for a shipmate some one with whom a man could talk plainly and unburden himself of his grievances without any fear that whatever he said would be passed on to others.

He had often felt in his heart that it was because he pitied his loneliness that Eddie Torrance, younger by ten years and cleverer, had gone out of his way to show himself friendly. It had hurt him to think that he wasn't sought after because of some charm of manner he might have or his character or disposition, but because of his failings. But now he no longer cared. Eddie had been his friend. That was enough.

There came a tap at the door. Young MacRae thrust his pale face into the room.

"Oh," he said. "I couldn't find you."

Mr. Malone nodded. This was typical of the fourth. If he thought there was no one at hand he was scared.

"How's the steam?"

"About a hundred and fifty."

"Right! She's coming along nicely. I'll be down in a minute, Mister."

Mr. MacRae held in his hand a sheet of writing paper. He hesitated and gave a little cough and said hesitantly:

"Would you like to hear a few verses I've made up about that fight last night between us and the *Emerald Reef?* They're not very good, I know, but I'm trying a new style."

Mr. Malone looked at him sharply.

"All right," he said, "if they're not too long. Fire ahead!"

Mr. MacRae began to recite in a rather high-pitched, sing-song voice:

"This is the yarn of how we smashed the crew of the *Emerald Reef,*
We fought 'em aboard their darned old craft,
We fought 'em with 'ands and teef,
And we made 'em bitterly rue their daft,
Impossible tricks, tryin' to fix
A hard-case crowd like us from the *Honda,*
That 'ad never known what it was to be beat
By any crowd we ever 'ad meet,
From 'Frisco to way back yonda!"

Mr. MacRae broke off and looked anxiously at the second engineer.

"What do you think of it so far, Mr. Malone?"

"It's fine," said Mr. Malone in a rather dazed way. "You might lemme see what you've written, will you?" The fourth engineer handed him the piece of paper. "There," said Mr. Malone. "I knew you were wrong, Mister. Look at the last word in the third line!"

Mr. MacRae took the paper back into his own hands.

"Teef?" he said inquiringly.

"Yes," said Mr. Malone, "you've spelt it backward. It ought to be feet. Fought 'em with hands and feet. You know, kicked the sons of sows!"

"No," said Mr. MacRae firmly, "teef is the word, to rhyme with reef! The poem's supposed to be spoken by a quite illiterate deck-hand, and he always says teef not teeth, toof not tooth! Do you see?"

"Which one does that?"

"No one, really, he's just a character I've invented."

"Oh," said Mr. Malone. "All right. Go ahead with the rest of it, then."

"The focsle 'ands of the *Emerald Reef,*
As mournful a lot as you'd want to see,
Was frightened beyond belief,
When they heard us comin' along the quay,
Firemen and sailors, as mad as tailors,
Shouting we'd make 'em fight,
Whether they'd any desire or not!
We weren't the kind of crowd that forgot
We was in the right.
And there wasn't a single son-of-a-gun
But knew that we meant it,
Every word! They were quite dementit,
When they found that the scrap 'ad begun!"

Mr. MacRae stopped, his face pink, his eyes bright.

"That's all," he said. "Pretty rotten, isn't it? The second verse isn't as good as the first, I know. I'd like a candid opinion,

Mr. Malone. I don't mind in the least."

"Well," said Mr. Malone, "it's not quite as good as the first, Mister, you're right!"

"Lacks something, doesn't it? That's what's been worrying me. I'll have to work on it before I go on to the other verses. Whereabouts do you think it's most weak, scansion or what?"

"Scansion, of course," said Mr. Malone.

He didn't in the least know what the fourth was driving at. But if it pleased him to think the scansion, whatever the scansion might be, was wrong, then it was wrong.

"Well," said Mr. MacRae, "there's just this to be said. I'm not tying myself down to any particular meter. My idea is, verse like this, rugged kind of verse, should be adaptable, not rigid. You understand, Mr. Malone, don't you, rigid not rugged! I mean rugged not rigid! That gives you the swing. The lilt, as it were. I think you'll like the fight part when I get to it. It'll go with rather a zip."

"I'll be glad to hear it," said Mr. Malone politely. "And now, Mister, though I don't want to hurry you and I'm enjoying our talk, I think you'd better be getting back to the engine-room!"

The fourth engineer withdrew, apparently quite happy.

Mr. Malone sighed. Of all the daft creatures he'd ever met, MacRae was the worst! If he had to listen to any more of his —— poetry he'd be sick.

He rose to his feet, then, and stretched out his arms and yawned. He'd better be going down to the engine-room himself to see what the fourth was up to. He didn't trust him out of his sight. If anything went wrong he'd be blamed, naturally.

The chief was ashore. He'd given no reason for going. But he'd gone to the hospital to inquire after the third engineer, Mr. Malone knew. He resented the chief's secrecy. Why couldn't he have said straight out where he was going and not have acted a lie? Funny, that! The chief had always pretended to dislike the third, but he didn't dislike him at all. Most men pretended to be what they weren't. That was in Mr. Malone's opinion why it was difficult to get on with them. When the chief had been told that Eddie Torrance was bad he'd just nodded his head and plucked at his beard and said, "Oh, how was that?" as if he wasn't concerned in the very least. Yet as soon as he could, the first thing in the morning, he'd slipped off to the hospital to see him. And what good did he hope to do, reflected Mr. Malone with unusual bitterness. When Eddie Torrance regained consciousness, whom would he want to see? The chief? Not likely! He'd ask for his friend.

Mr. Malone noticed that the suit he had worn ashore the night before lay on the top of his bureau. He loathed untidiness as much in his own room as in the engine-room or stokehold. He drew out a drawer and lifted the jacket in his right hand. Mechanically, before reaching for the clothes brush, he felt in his pockets.

With a shock he found he had been carrying around a wallet that was not his. Then he remembered. This was the wallet Joe Webber, who ran the joint on Steuart Street, had given him.

He climbed down the long steel ladders to the engine-room and entered the stokehold through the tunnel between the centre and starboard boilers.

"Sparrow," he said.

"Sir," said the fireman.

"This is yours." Mr. Malone held out the wallet. "Some one had it it didn't belong to!"

"Thank you, sir."

Spadger took the wallet into his big hands. He was amazed. Here was his wallet when he'd given up all hope of ever seeing it any more. The second must have taken it off Chuck, the man who'd stolen it in the fight.

Mr. Malone looked at the dials between the boilers and then went back into the engine room.

Spadger opened the wallet and cursed.

"There was thirty dollars about in this here wallet when that swine from the *Emerald Reef* swiped it. Now there's five. Now listen to me, fellers, this ain't the end of that business between him and me. It's just beginning. Mebbe I won't see him again before we sail, but I will some day, in Cardiff or London or New York or B. A., and when I do see him, I tell you straight, I'll take the swine and I'll do all I can to him, short o' killing him, and if it come to that I'll swing for him rather than let him get away with a mean, dirty trick like this!

"Thirty dollars I had and he took twenty-five, and if it hadn't have been for the

second getting the wallet back for me, he'd have stole the lot!"

"I wonder 'ow the second got hold of it!" said Mears.

"Punched the swine's head, prob'ly. I'll have to ask him some time."

## XIX

IN A little room in the hospital Mr. Forester, the chief engineer of the *Honda*, sat by the side of the bed where the third engineer lay, his head in bandages.

Mr. Forester had been permitted to see the patient on the condition that he said nothing to excite him. He might stay ten minutes, no longer. He had explained that the ship was sailing at 3 P. M., it was then noon, he had little enough time to spare in any case. He would say good-by and go.

The interview, however, was not quite what he had anticipated.

Before he had uttered more than a few vague words of sympathy, the third engineer began to speak in a low, husky voice.

"Chief," he said, "I'm not going to stay here. You've got to get me away. Do you understand? I mean it!"

The chief nodded his head. He must humor him.

"You're not going to stay here, Mr. Torrance. No, of course not! Why should you?"

"Chief, when you talk like that, I know you don't mean a word of it. I'm in earnest, though. I'm not going to stay here."

The chief was startled.

"Now, Mr. Torrance, you're a sick man. You mustn't excite yourself."

"I'll be a sick man, Chief, if I don't go with the ship, and that's the truth."

"You mustn't say that, Mister. They wouldn't let you come, even if—even if we were willing to take you! It's impossible."

The boy turned his head on the pillow and stared out of the window over the house tops.

"If I stay here in hospital, I'll choke," he said. "I can't even breathe. I'm stifled. I want the sea and the fresh air."

"No," said the chief kindly, "no, Mr. Torrance, it's not possible. You mustn't think of it. If you're patient and don't fret you'll be well before you know where you are and homeward bound on another ship. There! That's the truth. A matter of a few weeks and you'll be as sound as ever you were in your life!"

And if that didn't encourage him, nothing would.

For a time the boy was silent, then he said:

"How's old Malone? All right, eh? He's a bit slow, but he means well always."

"Malone's all right," said the chief.

"Didn't he come up here with me last night? I came to before I got here, and I thought I saw him but I wasn't sure."

"Yes, Malone drove with you in the ambulance."

"Listen, Chief, I'm not so bad as you think. I'm feeling a bit quiet, but I can think all right and I've got no pain. Chief, are you signing on another third engineer in my place?"

"No. There's no chance of getting any one else here. We'll go home with three engineers only."

"Then I can have my room. I won't be keeping any one out of a job. Now, listen, Chief, if I don't come home aboard the *Honda*, I'll die. That's the truth! Go to the Old Man at once and tell him to take me. Tell him—" the thin lips twitched into a half smile— "tell him I'll die if he doesn't, and I'll haunt him."

The chief was suddenly uneasy.

"I couldn't do it, Mr. Torrance. I couldn't."

"Not go to the captain and say just that? Chief, you must!"

"Mr. Torrance, it doesn't depend on the captain. It's the doctors who wouldn't let you do what you want!"

The boy sighed.

"I can't explain, but I've got to come with the ship. I've got to."

A nurse in white uniform appeared in the doorway. The chief rose to his feet.

"Good-by, m' boy, I hope—I hope—"

He ended abruptly, not knowing what he had intended to say.

"Chief, you do as I tell you. See the Old Man. Tell him I'm coming home aboard the *Honda!*"

"We sail at three, Mr. Torrance," said the chief. "It's not possible now."

Nevertheless in the wide, airy corridor outside the room he asked the nurse if he might to speak to one of the doctors.

A young man in a white jacket and dark trousers approached.

"This is the doctor who's in charge of the case," said the nurse.

Mr. Forester turned to him eagerly.

"Doctor, I want to ask if you'd permit that third engineer of ours to be moved. We're sailing at three o'clock this afternoon. He's worrying. He says if he doesn't come with us, he'll die!"

The doctor shook his head.

"Impossible! I wouldn't answer for the consequences if he leaves the hospital!"

"Then we can't take him?"

"I'm afraid not. The risk would be too great. Next week it might have been different! But today, no."

"Rot!" The third engineer stood at the door of the room, supporting himself against the door post. "Chief, you do as I say! Get hold of the Old Man. Tell him he's —— well got to take me!"

The doctor and the nurse caught him.

Mr. Forester, feeling very unhappy, walked slowly along the corridor toward the elevator.

## XX

THE clouds rolled away and the sun came out. The afternoon was warm and bright. The sky was a summer blue. The mountains of Contra Costa seemed very near.

Soon after three o'clock the *Honda's* whistle began to screech.

On a plank, suspended over the *Emerald Reef's* port quarter, Chuck Martin and Blooey Radkin and another deck-hand, Penny, who were painting over big patches of red lead, heard the whistle and stopped working.

"The *Honda's* sailing," said Chuck excitedly. "Fellers, we got to be in this."

He reached for the rope-ladder that hung from the after well-deck and began to climb.

The boatswain leaned over the bulwark rail.

"You fellers, get on wi' yer painting! D'yer hear me?"

Chuck was prepared to be truculent: He halted half way up the ladder and reasoned.

"Painting ain't so —— important, bose, we can't have a bit of a spell."

"Oh, to say good-by to the *Honda*, is it?"

The boatswain who, like most of the *Emerald Reef's* crew, bore the scars of the battle of the night before, growled and spat tobacco juice into the water.

"Well, if you want to cheer 'em, you cheer, but don't you blasted well ask me to! Five minutes you have and back you go to your work or I'll have the mate biting me head off once more."

Chuck Martin and the two other men ran forward along the after well-deck. Deck-hands from other parts of the deck dropped their work. The *Honda* was sailing! The cooks came out of the galley. The *Honda* was sailing! Give the swine a send-off they wouldn't forget! Anything to throw at the skunks! The cargomen asked what in thunder the trouble was. The rattling of the winches ceased. Chuck dived into the entrance to the fiddley and shouted down the gratings to the stokehold where firemen were working.

"You fellers down there, come on up and say good-by to the *Honda!* She's moving out o' dock."

He hurried down the length of ladder to the middle grating and made his way into the 'tween decks where there were piles of ashes waiting to be dumped when the ship was at sea again and filled his cap with clinkers.

The firemen arrived on deck with their hands full of coal.

The *Honda*, in charge of tugs, drew slowly out from her berth and moved into the dock toward the Bay, so close to the *Emerald Reef* that the men on her decks could be recognized clearly.

The crew of the *Emerald Reef*, deck-hands and firemen, the cooks, the stewards, the greasers, the boatswain and carpenter lined the rails and began to boo.

"Yeller, you're yeller!" they chanted. "The *Honda's* yeller!"

Chuck Martin yelled:

"Look fellers, there's that red-headed *sooer* who was fighting the mate last night on California! Look at him!"

He hurled a piece of clinker at the red-headed man on the *Honda's* forecastle head. The clinker smashed against the windlass. The mate, Mr. Pett—they remembered Mr. Pett on board the *Emerald Reef*—shook his fist.

"Cut that out, do you hear?"

The crew of the *Emerald Reef* howled.

"Come on, fellers, let's give it 'em!"

The *Honda* was bombarded with lumps of coal and clinker and potatoes from the galley.

Mr. Hollick felt it his duty to interfere. The stevedores were watching. What would they think of him!

"You men," he said, "chuck it. Do you hear me?"

Some one laughed.

"Isn't that just what we are doing, chucking it?"

Mr. Ross, the second engineer, his right hand and wrist bandaged and supported by a sling, came on deck from the portside engine-room alleyway. He saw what was happening and threw back his head and shouted with laughter.

"Let 'em alane, Mr. Hollick! Hah, hah, hah! They're daein' nae real harrm! If it wasna what ye micht term *infra dig*, I'd gi'e ten dollars to the man wha daes the maist damage to thur hoodlums!"

Mr. Hollick decided it would be useless to say any more. And, after all, who had started it? The *Honda*, of course. Well, then, serve them right.

And after all, he reflected, it was the mate's business to keep order. The mate was aboard. Why didn't he show up? He didn't want to!

The mess-room lad appeared with a bag of oranges.

Mr. Ovenden, the third mate, laughed.

"The widow's mite," he said. "Mr. Ross, keep your eye on the lad!"

The *Honda's* bridge was level with the *Emerald Reef's* galley. The mess-room lad, hugging his bag of oranges, ran on forward and stood by the portside lower bridge ladder. He set the bag down at his feet and flung an orange hard at the *Honda's* upper bridge.

The captain of the *Honda* stood in the starboard wing. He raised a megaphone to his mouth and shouted. His voice carried harsh and booming:

"Despicable outrage! Ashamed—"

The orange curved through space and smashed into pulp on his face.

A roar of voices arose from the *Emerald Reef's* deck, as in olden times in battle men must have cheered a successful broadside. Crew and cargomen alike howled with delight.

The orange! Gosh! the orange had hit the *Honda's* Old Man in the face and smashed.

Chuck Martin yelled—

"Three cheers for the *Honda's* skipper and his orange."

He began to boo. Other men booed, also.

Mr. Humphreys hurried up the companion from the portside saloon alleyway.

The mess-room lad, red in the face, was hopping from one leg to the other, screaming insults at the *Honda*.

"What the —— are you doing here?" growled Mr. Humphreys. "What is it?"

Mr. Ovenden and Mr. Ross were leaning helplessly against the rail, laughing and hugging each other.

"He hit the *Honda's* skipper in the face with a rotten orange!"

The mate was annoyed. He had kept out of the way on purpose. Now he felt things had gone too far.

"Get away from here," he said to the mess-room lad.

"You unspeakable swine!" shouted the *Honda's* chief engineer from the bridge-deck. "Wait till we see you again! What do you mean carrying on like this?"

The *Emerald Reef's* crew shouted.

The old fool had a beard! Look at it! A beard!

"Beaver!" they screamed. "Beaver!"

And in chorus they baaed like goats.

Mr. Humphreys cupped his hands and shouted.

"Your own faults and you know it! Serve you —— well right!"

He turned then and went back to his own room. He didn't care very much now what happened. The *Honda's* crowd had been the first to fight, yet because they were hit back they complained! On the whole, though, knowing what feelings had been roused, Mr. Humphreys was glad that the *Honda* was bound for Yokohama and not, like the *Emerald Reef*, for Tahiti or Auckland. If the two vessels had met again, with the same crews aboard, some one or other would have been killed for sure.

On the bridge-deck, outside the galley, Mr. Ross presented the mess-room lad with a dollar as a mark of appreciation for what he had done.

## XXI

LATE in the afternoon Captain Gardiner walked with a lurching, rolling gait down Market Street toward the Ferry Building. He looked like a prosperous farmer, a rancher from the San Joachim Valley on his annual visit to San Francisco, well-to-do but ill at ease, eager to be back to his fruit trees or his cattle or hogs or alfalfa.

His large, brown face was set in a scowl. His eyes were somber, his lips were pressed

tight. He wore a suit of gray Scotch homespun, badly in need of sponging and pressing, with the trousers turned up to show gray home-knitted wool socks, and brown brogues with crape-rubber soles.

On his head was a hard black felt hat, that he himself would have called a bowler and any one seeing it, a derby.

In his right hand he carried a heavy Irish blackthorn which from time to time he banged angrily on the sidewalk.

He heard a man say to a girl:

"See that! If you never saw an Englishman before, one's just passed you!"

Captain Gardiner scowled.

He wasn't English. He was Welsh and proud of it! He had an impulse to turn back and tell the young man he was mistaken and ask him why he went out of his way to insult strangers who'd done him no harm. But that, he reflected, would be foolish.

Because things had gone wrong and he was in one of his bad tempers, why make trouble for himself? Better walk on and say nothing. When he was back aboard ship, in his own quarters, he could relax and give himself over freely to black anger, if he wished, and gloom and the examination of the events of the past twenty-four hours and all his worries.

His day had tired him. He was disappointed and depressed. Never before had he felt so mortified, so annoyed, so bewildered.

His ship had been boarded by men from another ship. His officers had been set upon and maltreated. His men had been hurt. If ever a shipmaster had justifiable grounds for anger, he had. Nevertheless, to his amazement, far from supporting him in his view and urging him to go ahead and take measures to punish those responsible for a series of entirely unprovoked outrages, neither at the British consulate nor the agent's nor even at the ship chandler's had he received encouragement.

Let sleeping dogs lie, he had been advised. His men had probably given as good as they had got. Sailors weren't like ordinary men. It didn't do to take their troubles too much to heart.

Besides, in the circumstances, in the present case, when the two ships were under the same flag, was it tactful—policy would be the better word—was it policy to draw attention to what might well be forgotten with advantage?

Legal action, moreover, was out of the question.

The *Honda* had sailed at three o'clock. He could in any event do nothing now until he reached home again. There, he might, if he was fortunate, obtain some satisfaction.

But, and this was a point that was impressed upon him at the agent's, already the story of the fight between the crews of the two ships had spread. The third engineer of the *Honda* was reported to be dying. He had been assaulted on board the *Emerald Reef* by one of the *Emerald Reef's* hands when he had been trying to check the riot. The wisest course would be to do nothing, say nothing. When Captain Gardiner had said he could produce witnesses to prove that the third engineer had hit some one before he was hit, he was told that sailor witnesses didn't carry much weight, they were certain to be biased in favor of their own vessel, so much so that they were liable to lose sight of the truth.

Just before leaving the agent's office Captain Gardiner, in his most despondent mood, had hinted that possibly the police might be disposed to take action.

The police!

Captain Gardiner had been made to feel small.

Didn't he realize that the fighting had taken place on shipboard and not in the street?

Not all the fighting, he had retorted. His mate and his second engineer had been assaulted on California Street! What about that?

Had he witnesses? Not to his knowledge. He was afraid he hadn't.

Altogether, a most unsatisfactory series of interviews. And on top of everything else there had been a letter from the owners, touching on such controversial matters as a damaged lighter, bunker coal, demurrage, pilotage fees, and so on—one of those letters that made a man realize how insignificant the master of a tramp steamer was.

Captain Gardiner had halted at the corner of Second Street to permit a loaded truck to pass. Before he could move on once more he saw out of the corner of his eye a smallish man in a blue suit approaching from the other side of Market Street.

The resemblance to Captain Pennell was so extraordinary that Captain Gardiner was astounded.

And then he saw that the smallish man in blue was Pennell himself!

What was he doing in San Francisco when the *Honda* had sailed at three?

"Captain Gardiner, I want to speak to you."

Captain Gardiner had no wish to be drawn into any argument. He halted on the opposite corner of Second Street and said gruffly:

"I'm in a hurry. What do you want?"

Captain Pennell was out of breath.

"I want to tell you that I hold you to blame personally. You! You understand! I'm taking the opportunity now I'm ashore again of putting in a report on the conduct of your ship's company. I intend to place all responsibility of what happened on your shoulders, as captain! Do you quite understand what I mean?"

"Understand! No, I don't understand! I know that your men have blackguarded mine and insulted and beaten my officers and injured them, and you needn't think by talking big that you're going to put us in the wrong. And after the treatment I had this morning, Captain Pennell, I should have thought you'd have had sense enough to keep your remarks to yourself."

"Captain Gardiner," said Captain Pennell, "your men hurt my third engineer. Set on him and laid him out. If he dies, you'll answer for his death. I'm on my way to see him in hospital now. I've delayed sailing on purpose. The *Honda's* moored out in the stream. I wouldn't have trusted my ship near yours for any money you liked to offer me. I know your officers and your men too well. I know you too well."

"You —— fool!" said Captain Gardiner. "How many times am I to tell you it was your men started the trouble! Why did they come aboard my ship last night, eh? To fight, of course. If your third engineer got hurt, it was his own fault. He hit one of my men. I shouldn't waste time if I were you, pretending, acting as if you thought you'd a grievance. Eye-wash that's all! Better keep that kind of sob stuff till you get into court, and then try its effect on the judge!"

Captain Pennell's face was pale. His voice was hoarse and stuttering.

"I always heard you were a bully, Gardiner. I didn't believe it. But now I know it's true. You are. You realized, of course, that when you encouraged your men to inflict further damage on my ship, to degrade me in the eyes of my crew and the pilot and the stevedores, encouraged them, at least, by your presence, by not attempting to stop them, you laid yourself open to a charge, a criminal charge."

"What the —— do you mean?" said Captain Gardiner.

He advanced.

"Further damage! What have my men done to degrade you? It isn't possible, to begin with."

A small boy said—

"Why don't youse guys fight before the cops nab youse?"

"Now, listen to me, Captain Gardiner, it's about time you learnt I'm in earnest. You were on board your ship this afternoon when we left our berth and moved out into the stream. If you didn't exactly see your men bombarding us with coal and clinker you must have heard the noise they made! I was informed, too, by my mate that you were on board the *Emerald Reef*. He saw you on the bridge-deck. You must have seen, or heard, or been told that I was hit on the face when I was on the upper bridge by a bad orange thrown by one of your men!"

Captain Gardiner's face which had been growing more and more grim and menacing suddenly relaxed. He chuckled.

"Don't be a fool, Pennell! I wasn't on board. I'm not like you. If my men had dared behave like that in my presence, while I was on board, I'd have taken steps to make my authority felt. Understand me! I'm not like you. This morning when I was leaving your ship one of your men hit me on the back of the neck with an inch and a half steel nut. You knew that. You saw him. If that's the discipline you keep on board the *Honda*, I don't need to look any further for a cause of the trouble."

And then there flashed into his mind the picture of Captain Pennell on the bridge, the embodiment of authority, dignity and respectability, being hit in the face by a bad orange thrown from the *Emerald Reef*. He broke into a shout of laughter.

"Hah, hah, hah! And so they pelted you, did they, Pennell, and you were hit in the face by a bad orange! Oh, lord! Pennell, you'll be the death of me! Hit in the face by a bad orange, eh? That's worse than a steel bolt, isn't it? Not so dignified, eh? Oh, my lord! Pennell, what must you have

looked like! Hit in the face by a bad orange!"

He pushed his way through a grinning crowd of boys and started off toward the Ferry, shaking with mirth.

Pennell, hit in the face by a bad orange!

He had covered perhaps fifty yards when Captain Pennell was clutching at his elbow.

He turned on him quickly and shortened his hold on his blackthorn.

"Keep away from me, Pennell! Drop your hands this instant."

## XXII

CAPTAIN PENNELL'S face was white and hard, his eyes were set and strained. His whole appearance seemed to have altered. He looked like a man so wild with rage that he was prepared to cast discretion aside.

His hands dropped to his sides. He spoke in a voice little louder than a whisper.

"I'll make you sorry for this, Gardiner. You blundering old bully! Wait till I'm through with you before you laugh at me. I've got you, Gardiner. Got you fast! Wriggle, if you can, but you won't get away from me. I know things about you, you thieving crook, that will lose you your job and drag you into the gutter. You thought nobody knew, didn't you? I do. Do you understand what I'm telling you? I know, for one."

Captain Gardiner felt a cold foreboding of disaster. He tried to laugh. His throat suddenly was dry and he could, he felt, scarcely breathe.

"What the —— do you mean?" he said, and he spoke now, like Captain Pennell, in a whisper.

"You talk big, Gardiner, you always talked big, but you're crooked! Money that was put into your hands by a friend to be used for his wife and children you kept for yourself!"

"That's a —— lie!" said Captain Gardiner.

But was it? His forehead was moist with sweat.

"Is it a —— lie?" said Captain Pennell, smiling his cold smile. "What did you do with the money after you cashed the check? A woman had it, of course, but not the woman it was intended for."

"I don't know what in the world you're talking about," said Captain Gardiner thickly.

"You know —— well what I'm talking about! Harry Evans told me the whole story years ago, just before he died, when we were homeward bound from Chili with nitrate. He quarreled with his wife, found out what we'd known all along, the lot of us, told her straight he'd have no more to do with her and left her."

"Listen to me," said Captain Gardiner. "You've got more time to waste than I have. I'm going!"

"You're not going, Gardiner! You'll hear what I've got to tell you first, so you can't pretend afterwards I didn't know what I was talking about! I know what Evans said to you and where! I know how much he handed over to you! He met you in New York when you were mate of the *Kansala*, homeward bound. He gave you a check for two hundred pounds. He asked you to help his wife without letting her know the money had come from him. That's so, isn't it?"

"Well," said Captain Gardiner. "And what about it?"

"What about it! My ——! You took the money and promised to do what he asked and then you spent it on another woman! No, don't argue, Gardiner, and don't interrupt! I'm speaking the truth and you know I am! You took the money and you spent it on some one else and twelve months later Harry Evans found his wife on the streets! The money had never been paid her. Not a penny!

"The bank told him they'd paid the money to you. Where were you? At sea. Where was the receipt Harry had asked you to get from his wife so she couldn't say she'd never had any money from any one? Where was the receipt? Why didn't you let him have it? There wasn't a receipt, of course. He wrote and you never answered your letters. He never saw you again. Three years after you stole that money—yes, Gardiner, stole—he and I were shipmates on board the *Torbreck* and he told me what kind of a man you were.

It was when he knew he was dying he put the whole story down on paper and signed it. I've got that paper now on board the *Honda!* I was going to destroy it. I'm glad I didn't! And in my pocket this instant, Gardiner, I've got a letter I've written home, telling what you've done. I'm going to mail it and

smash you. That's all. And hit me if you dare! Just once! You try any rough stuff with me and see how fast I call that policeman and have you run in. That letter's going and —— help you when you reach Cardiff! You've dug your own grave. Any doubts I might have had gone. You're what I thought you were. No good!"

Captain Gardiner had listened to Captain Pennell's fierce, low-voiced attack in silence. His first impulse, to get the letter from him by force, he rejected as preposterous. If one letter was taken, another would be written. And so he muttered:

"Lies! All lies!"

But they weren't lies. Not altogether. That was the —— of it!

Captain Pennell laughed harshly.

"Lies! Rot! Don't be a fool, Gardiner! I'm speaking the truth and you know I am! And soon every one else will know it, too, and you'll be broke, sure as fate, as you ought to have been twenty years ago."

Captain Gardiner turned on his heel and went lumbering down Market Street toward the Ferry Building.

He felt physically sick. Pennell was wrong. Yet Pennell was right. Near enough right to do what he'd said he'd do—ruin him! Evans had given him a check for two hundred pounds in New York. He'd brought the check home with him and was making arrangements to pay the money to Evans's wife. And then Jack had come to him, his brother, half crazy with fear, late at night and begged him to save his name and his home and his honor. Honor! ——! Even now, twenty years after, the word seemed inappropriate, far-fetched, absurd!

Jack's wife, Mabel, Annie's youngest sister, was ill with typhoid. If anything came out now against her husband, she would die. He must have money or he'd be ruined, disgraced. By slow degrees in the little front room of the house in Bootle Jack had told him the story. There was a woman, a woman of the same stamp as Evans's unfortunate wife, who'd got hold of him and was making mischief and threatening exposure unless he gave her the money she wanted.

She said she'd go to his wife and tell her what kind of a man she'd married.

The incredible folly of youth!

What could a man do when his only brother begged him with tears in his eyes to help him?

He hadn't taken the money; not exactly. He'd borrowed it! The two hundred pounds, paid in a lump sum, had saved Jack from disgrace. The woman had taken the money and cleared out. The two hundred pounds had bought her silence, saved Jack's reputation, kept Mabel alive. And Evans's wife hadn't lost. Captain Gardiner smiled grimly as he remembered how out of his pay as mate he had scraped and pinched and saved and denied himself drinks and smokes to pay her the money he'd taken. He'd done what he had set out to do, paid her the full two hundred pounds in instalments, with interest! And no one had ever known, not even Annie!

And now, after all these years, Evans was dead, Evans's wife was dead, Jack was dead, Mabel was still alive, proud of her dead husband, happy to think how good he was to her and how perfect in every way, and he himself, who had saved Jack from disgrace, was suspected of having used money that wasn't his to buy off a woman who had had some hold over him!

The thought of the scandal staggered him.

He'd given his word to Jack never to speak of what he'd done! For the sake of his sick wife. Never, never must Mabel know what a blackguard her husband was. At the time he had sympathized and understood and been sorry for Mabel! But now——, now his own wife would believe the worst of him.

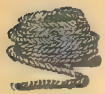
Poor Annie! Never quite sure of his love for her, he knew. Never quite sure of her own power and attractiveness. She'd be told her husband was a thief and a blackguard, a low cur who'd got into the clutches of women who took money off him that ought to have been spent on her, his wife!

Poor Annie! He hadn't been very kind to her, he reflected. Not so kind as he ought to have been. She'd leave him, of course. Nor could he blame her. But life wouldn't be worth living afterward.

How, in ——'s name, would he be able to prove he hadn't done all that Pennell had said without dragging Jack's name into the mud? But what could he prove, anyway?

What a despicable blackguard Pennell was!

## XXIII



THE morning broke gray and cold. A keen wind blew from the north west. Tamalpais was once more hidden by heavy, low-lying clouds.

On board the *Honda*, still at anchor in midstream, Mr. Pett, the mate, walked to and fro on the bridge-deck and talked with the pilot.

Mr. Pett was angry.

"Dunno what's happened to the Old Man," he said. "Must have a bigger pull with the owners than I thought he had."

"Hasn't he told you what he's waiting for, then?" asked the pilot.

"Me?" said Mr. Pett scornfully. "He tells me nothing. I'm the mate, I am, not the steward. He treats me like he'd treat one of the hands. I'm not consulted, not told things. Do you know there've been times when I've not known up to the minute of sailing where we were bound to? He's like that, the Old Man is. Secretive! He likes to keep everything under his own hat, as the saying goes. It's a solemn fact, again and again, I've been told, casual-like, by the steward or the chief engineer—once I'm —— if it wasn't the cook who'd heard from the ship-chandler's runner—we're sailing at such a time or we're going to such a place. It isn't right! It's all wrong! What kind of a show must I look to the hands when they see me, mooning about, not knowing where we're bound to and waiting to be told the same as them?

"If the captain has no respect for his mate, it means his mate is going to have his work cut out to get the respect of the hands. I'm not one to sit still and sulk. No, sir, I know my job. I've made myself respected on every ship I ever sailed in, and feared, too! When I speak to the hands, sir, they jump or I'll know the reason why not! The Old Man don't dare go too far with me, either—he knows me too well. He's got a jealous streak in him. I don't know for certain, mind, but I've been told in confidence that he's been keeping me out of a command, blocking my way. Maybe he has. I'd not be surprized. But he hasn't succeeded. I'm due a ship of my own next time we're home!"

"Here's a motor boat headed this way," said the pilot.

Captain Pennell descended the ladder from the lower bridge.

"Won't keep you much longer now, Captain," he said to the pilot.

"That so, Captain," said the pilot. "Well, that's all right, I guess. I ain't worrying."

"Do you know who's coming, Mr. Pett?" said the captain.

"No, sir, I don't," said Mr. Pett.

"Mr. Torrance, the third engineer."

Mr. Pett was astounded.

So this was it! The old man had gone ashore to arrange for the third engineer to be brought aboard!

Captain Pennell stood at the head of the accommodation ladder watching the motor boat.

The chief engineer appeared at the door leading to the portside engine-room alleyway. Mr. Pett stood by his side.

"Chief, did you know that the old man had arranged to have the third engineer brought aboard?"

"Is the third coming with us, then?" The chief wiped his hands on a piece of waste and stepped over the high sill on to the deck. "And so that's what we were waiting for, eh!"

They moved toward the ladder. The motor boat came slowly alongside.

Mr. Hargreaves, the second mate, and Kinlan were standing at the foot of the ladder.

"Another of you," said Captain Pennell. "You, what's your name? Armstrong, down with you and give that other deck-hand a hand."

But the ambulance men who had come out to the *Honda* in the motor boat preferred to finish their job themselves.

"We'll get him aboard," one of them said.

The deck-hands and the firemen of the *Honda* not on watch, the stewards, the cook, the boatswain and carpenter leaned over the rails and watched. The murmur of voices was silenced as they saw the two ambulance men carrying the third engineer up the ladder. His face was pale, his head was hidden in bandages, a big red blanket was wrapped about him.

He smiled and gave a little nod as they reached the level of the bridge-deck.

"Cheerio, everybody," he said.

"Good lad," said Captain Pennell.

Then, afraid that he had been betrayed into an expression of sentiment, which he

abhorred, preferring to be considered a martinet on board ship, he turned and climbed the bridge ladder.

"Not long before we're away, Captain," he said to the pilot.

The ambulance men, carrying the third engineer in a sitting position between them, followed the chief engineer into the starboard engine-room alleyway.

The mate spoke to the deck-hands on the bridge-deck.

"All right, you men, don't hang around here doing nothing! You, Tanqueray, you're for the wheel. Armstrong, Hull, Kinlan, get for'ard! Bosun, I'm going to the focsle head now. Where's the carpenter? All right, chips! Ready? Mr. Moodie, tell Mr. Hargreaves to get the ladder hoisted as soon as those two men have gone."

He walked briskly forward. On the flying bridge Captain Pennell, impatient to be away, growled:

"What's happened to those two fellows? What's keeping them?"

They appeared, smiling, as men will smile who have tasted nectar, and hurried toward the ladder.

Captain Pennell rang the telegraph to "stand by," and deep down in the engine-room Mr. Malone checked a yawn as the gong clanged, threw away his half smoked cigaret and moved across the platform to the I.P. column.

MR. MACRAE stood by the dial of the telegraph and shifted the pointer in answer to the signal from the bridge.

"Put the water service on, donkey," said Mr. Malone.

Through the open skylights high above the cylinder tops there came the raucous screeching of the whistle. Mr. Malone turned and looked at the fourth.

"Mister," he said, "for five minutes, that's all I ask, try and forget you're a poet, and keep awake!"

The telegraph gong clanged.

Slow ahead!

The fourth engineer, scowling—why the deuce couldn't the second treat a man like a civilized human being?—answered the signal and scribbled on the blackboard the symbol and time.

Mr. Malone opened the intermediate stop and threw the engines into gear with a tremendous roaring of steam and a clatter.

The cranks turned slowly, ponderously—*ssh, ssh, ssh!*

He shut the H. P. drain and whistled softly.

Off at last!

Half ahead! Again the gong clanged sonorously.

He opened the intermediate stop half way. The beat of the engines quickened.

*Pwe-fuh, pwe-fuh, pwe-fuh!*

And then—

*Per-wat-ah, per-wat-ah, per-wat-ah!*

Mr. Malone listened and nodded his head and felt the H.P. bottom end, adjusted in port.

Slow ahead!

Mr. MacRae sighed, "Blast the bridge!" and answered.

Mr. Malone moved once more to the intermediate stop and tightened up.

Half speed!

"What the —— are they playing at?"

"Ferry boats," said the donkeyman from the middle platform. "Ferry boats and tugboats. The curse of 'Frisco! I know, Mister. When I was working out on the coast, Mister, I remember—"

As he spoke he was swabbing the rods with heavy oil, holding on to the hand-rail.

"You and your tugboats," said Mr. Malone scornfully.

"Ah! Me and me tugboats," said the donkeyman.

The fourth engineer laughed shrilly.

"Him and his tugboats! How many, donkey?"

"When did you last take your medicine, Mr. MacRae?" said the second engineer. "It's about due, isn't it? You're over excited."

The chief engineer came slowly down the ladder. He stood on the platform, tugging his beard and sniffing. He said often he could stand in the engine-room with his eyes shut and his ears plugged and tell how the engines were running, and the pumps, just by his sense of smell.

"Anything wrong, Chief?" asked Mr. Malone.

"No, Mister. You're going to have plenty of oil, aren't you?"

"Yes, Chief."

Minutes passed.

"Getting away from San Francisco isn't like getting away from most ports," said the chief. "It's easy. The Old Man's jumpy today, all the same. Nerves."

Full ahead! The gong clanged.

Mr. Malone opened the intermediate stop full, the cranks increased their speed, the noise they made was smooth and easy at last.

The chief connected up the automatic governor.

"Going to get it a bit nasty outside," he said.

He chuckled. His face was red, his eyes were watery and pink-lidded. He seemed amused.

Mr. Malone glanced at him curiously. Usually, at the start of a voyage, the chief was as worried as a cat on hot bricks, jumpy, too sour to smile, even.

He felt the bottom ends.

Mr. MacRae, wondering why he had ever been crazy enough to go to sea, felt the bottom ends, too.

The donkeyman dipped the syphons of the main bearings. He oiled the eccentrics, leaning on the eccentric pit guard, humming a little song.

Mr. Malone stood by the chief's side. He could tell from his manner that he had news for him. He'd only to wait a while longer and he'd let him know what was making him smile and chuckle.

"Well, we're off at last, Chief," he said. "Yokohama! And after that, where will it be then, Chief? Singapore, Java, Rangoon—where?"

"The longer the voyage, the bigger the pay day," said the chief. "I'm an old bachelor and I'm not interested!" He grunted. "The fourth will have to stand his own watch, the third's."

"I told him that," said Mr. Malone.

He felt sad at the thought of Eddie Torrance's being left in San Francisco in hospital. The voyage would be dreary without him.

"Any news of the third today, Chief?"

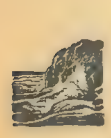
"Aye, there's news," said the chief.

"Did they say how he was?"

The chief chuckled.

"Mr. Malone, have you any idea who's aboard?"

## XXIV.



THE second engineer turned quickly, amazed, startled.

"What's that, Chief? Not the third! He's not aboard, surely!"

"Aye, Mister, he is that! The third's aboard!"

Mr. Malone wiped his forehead once more.

"Well, I'm ——!" he said. "And is that why the Old Man waited all night?"

"It is. Queer old stick, isn't he? He didn't say a word to me, nor the mate, nor no one else. He went up to the hospital yesterday when we dropped anchor, saw the head man, the super or whatever he calls himself, and told him he'd take all responsibility for looking after the third, if they'd let him go. They hummed and hawed a bit, so he told me just now, said it wasn't to be heard of and so on, but the Old Man convinced 'em somehow, and they said at last if everything was O.K., if the temperature, his temperature, you understand, wasn't too high and he'd had some sleep, they'd send him aboard this morning. And he's here!"

"Why didn't you tell me sooner?" said Mr. Malone.

The chief looked at him queerly and frowned, then he laughed.

"I told you as soon as it was good for you to know, Mister," he said.

"Well, I'm glad," said the second. He drew a deep breath. "I'm —— glad, Chief. You couldn't have brought me better news than this."

The chief was surprized and, to an extent, softened. Malone was a human being at heart. Surly, clumsy, silent, uncouth, there were depths in him no one would ever suspect. He could feel for once that he almost liked him. Strange, that! He didn't really like him. What had he in common with any one so bad tempered and sullen? Yet when he saw him, as he was now, worked up and excited, even, because his friend was on board the ship, he respected him.

He watched the work of the engine-room and listened in silence to the noise of his engines, a noise that was made up of lesser noises, each of which meant that a different part of his machinery was functioning correctly, easily, smoothly, efficiently.

The cranks, *err-oomph, err-oomph, err-oomph;* the Weir pumps, *shoo, shoo;* the bilge pump, *clack-clack-clack;* the ballast pump, *click-clack, click-clack;* the exhaust steam in the pipes, *ssh, ssh, ssh;* loudest of all the *shah, shah* from the steering engine high up, level with the between-decks.

He made his way into the stokehold and stood for a while watching the firemen at work. The dynamo was not running. The

only light was the daylight that filtered down through the gratings from the fiddley and the glare of the fires as the furnaces were thrown open reflected on faces and bare arms and chests.

He did not speak.

The firemen were, so far as he was concerned, more machines than men. Machines that were useful for handling rakes and slices and shovels, not fool-proof; liable to get out of repair through over-indulgence in alcohol; troublesome, generally; not to be compared with Asiatics for hard work and sobriety and efficiency.

In time to come flesh and blood must go. The fireman had had his day. What chief engineer in his senses would hesitate if he had his choice between a ship fired by machinery and one fired by men? Firemen! He hated the —— swine! Booze and women were their gods! Idle, worthless and stupid! The dregs of humanity!

Humanitarians talked of the innate nobility of man! What nobility was there in a drunken fireman? Would kind words and appeals to his better self make him do his work if he didn't choose?

Mr. Forester uttered a short laugh that made the men look at him suddenly and tap their foreheads behind his back and wink. Then, smiling to himself, his head thrust well forward, his arms folded across his chest, he left the stokehold and went once more into the engine-room.

He had, he felt, impressed the firemen.

And the firemen said to each other, "The old guy's potty," and laughed, and Spadger got up from the valve chest where he had seated himself to laugh and walked the length of the stokehold, his head thrust forward, his arms folded, knees bent a little, and feet turned out. From time to time he said:

"Haw, my men! Haw! Haw's the steam?"

Once again the gong clanged.

Stop!

The chief turned the handle of the telegraph and answered the bridge.

The second engineer tightened the intermediate stop once more. The beat of the cranks slowed down and stopped. The fourth engineer booked the order on the blackboard.

The ship heaved slowly to the motion of the sea.

Full ahead!

The second opened the intermediate stop once more.

"That'll be the last of it," said the chief. "The Farallones! The pilot's away." He balanced himself to the ship's rolling. "Ah, hah! what about it, eh, old gal! Kicking your heels a bit, eh."

"The glass has fallen since last night, the mate was telling me," said Mr. Malone.

"Shouldn't be surprized," said the chief indifferently. "I'm not worrying if you are!"

The bridge whistled down—

"All clear!"

The chief answered, "Very good, sir," and replaced the whistle in the tube. Then he said:

"Mr. Malone, if you want to see the third, you'd better go while you have the chance!"

"Thank you, sir!"

Mr. Malone, feeling that old Forester wasn't such a bad old thing after all, hurried up the long steel ladders to the top gratings above the cylinder tops and through the doorway that led to the starboard alleyway. He knocked at the door of the third engineer's berth.

"Come in," said a voice.

He entered and at once his enthusiasm was checked. He felt suddenly shy and awkward and clumsy. In the bunk lay the third engineer, looking strangely white and hollow-cheeked. His head was bandaged. His eyes were unnaturally bright and large.

He grinned feebly.

"How are you, m' lad? How goes it?"

Mr. Malone had a lump in his throat.

"By ——, Eddie," he said gruffly, "I'm glad to see you. I am. I dunno what I'd have done without you! How are you feeling?"

"Wonderful! They said I'd do. Not so bad as they thought, I guess. Maybe I scared 'em when I said I'd croak if the *Honda* left without me!"

Mr. Malone swore.

"If ever I get near that man who laid you out, there's going to be murder. As far as that goes if ever I come across any of that gang from the *Emerald Reef* I'll teach 'em they can't do what they did to us and get away with it! I'll take and fight 'em, one by one, every mother's son of 'em!"

"I shouldn't," said Mr. Torrance. "Not worth it. Silly business, fighting. What good does it do? Look at me. Bit of a wreck, eh?"

"Well, m' son, it's great to have you aboard. Honest, it is. You glad to be back?"

"Suffering cats, yes! I couldn't have stopped in that hospital another day, Mister. It's a fact." He grinned. "The old hooker's beginning to roll, eh?"

"Ah, running into dirty weather by the look of it!"

There came another knock. The door opened. Captain Pennell peered into the room.

He nodded to Mr. Malone and said rather nervously, it seemed:

"Well, Mr. Torrance, it's good to see you. Feeling better?"

"Thank you, sir, yes!"

"Well, you've got to take care of yourself. See! No excitement. Quiet. If there's anything you want, send me word. I've told the steward to look after you. It's not like the hospital, of course, but we'll do our best."

He gave another nod and withdrew.

Mr. Malone followed him into the alleyway.

"I beg your pardon, sir."

Captain Pennell frowned.

"Well, Mister."

"I just wanted to say, sir, it was very kind of you to delay sailing to take Mr. Torrance with us. We appreciate it, sir, very much."

Captain Pennell glared and shifted his weight from one foot to another.

"Oh, all right, Mister! No need to make a song and dance about it!"

"No, sir, but he's happier here than in hospital!"

"Quite! I couldn't do anything else. The least I could do. After all, Mr. Malone, when you come to think of it, he was hurt standing up for his own ship, wasn't he? It wasn't his own ship, was it?"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Malone. He remembered what he had just said to the third. "When I come across any of those swine from the *Emerald Reef*, I'll teach 'em a lesson they won't forget."

There was a sudden angry gleam in Captain Pennell's cold eyes—a sudden scowl between those eyes.

"H'm!" he grunted. "I've not done with them yet, either! Maybe they think they've scored. Well, they've not! I'm an easy man, Mister, when I'm treated right, but when things go wrong and I'm put upon, then I'm hard, as hard as they make 'em on Tyneside, and that's the —— of a hard school to learn in."

## XXV

IN THE engine-room the donkeyman talked to the fourth engineer.

"It's fellers like them from the *Emerald Reef* that give seafaring men a bad name. A nasty, quarrelsome crowd, ready to pick on a man and fight for no reason. You keep clear o' men like that, Mr. MacRae, and don't get mixed up in no waterfront rows! They don't do nobody no good."

Mr. MacRae smiled to himself.

"Donkey," he said, "tell me, what do men want to fight for, eh? Me, for instance, I've not had the slightest desire to fight any one, ever! And what's more, Donkey, nor have I ever given any one any cause for wanting to fight."

Alas! how unreliable is man's memory!

On the Embarcadero two nights before a man had asked Mr. MacRae if he could oblige him with a light for his pipe.

Mr. MacRae, wrapped in poetic ecstacy, had told him to go to blazes and walked on.

If a man is as innocent of wrong doing as his conscience permits him to feel, Mr. MacRae had done no wrong.

Yet at that moment Mr. Torrance lay in his bunk, worn out, exhausted, his wound at the back of his head throbbing in time to the beat of the cranks below in the engine room.

In the stokehold Spadger shut down the door of the No. 7 furnace, opened the two forced draught checks, and leaned on his shovel and wondered why he should have been attacked in that back room in 'Frisco and had his wallet stolen when he'd given no cause for trouble.

And Mears raked clinker out of the No. 3 furnace and paused and laughed softly as he thought of how he had dodged the fight on the *Emerald Reef* by lying flat on the forecastle head and how he had chucked the steel nut at the *Emerald Reef's* Old Man and cut his neck.

And on board the *Emerald Reef*, still lying at San Francisco, flying the Blue Peter and loading the last of her cargo for Tahiti and Auckland, Chuck Martin was asking himself gloomily what he had done that the mate should start in to pick on him without any reason? Hadn't he gone to his help night before last and saved him from being licked. Hadn't he kept the *Honda's* crowd from winning the scrap on the forward

well-deck? Hadn't he fought the big fireman they'd called Biddle, whom nobody else could tackle? He had. And the mate picked on him. It wasn't fair!

Mr. Ross nursed a sprained wrist, and because he had lost one tooth and had three others loosened, ate bread and milk and burgoo for his meals and toast sopped in tea.

Mr. Humphreys sulked. The skipper had treated him badly. Why should he have been blamed any more than any one else just because the hands had pelted the *Honda* with coal and clinker? If he had been on deck and had seen them, then it might have been different! But not even a mate could be in more than the one place at the same time! And anyway, why should the skipper go out of his way to take any notice of what had happened? The *Honda's* crowd had only got what they'd been asking for, the —— swines! And not half enough of it, either! And then there was the chief as well! When he thought of the chief, Mr. Humphreys was angry. The dressing of lint and plaster and balsam on the bridge of his nose, his swollen lips and his bruised cheeks kept reminding him of what the men from the *Honda* had done to him. And yet the chief had as good as said he was responsible. He wasn't to be trusted; he wasn't fit to be Maggie's husband! And why?

For no other reason than that when a pack of roughnecks had gone for him he had stood his ground. Supposing he'd run! Supposing he'd left the second engineer to fight for his own hand! What would the chief have said then? Would he have said, "Dan, you're the right man for Maggie! I'm proud of you!" Not he! He'd have despised him and quite right, too! But that was the chief all over. Say one thing and act another. A man had no right to judge other men unless he took into consideration all the facts.

It was this thought, too, this judging of other men without having the facts, that had roused Captain Gardiner from the depths of despair to a wild and burning anger. His position, through no real fault of his own, through no actual crime, anyway, was desperate! Pennell, the most despicable cur he had ever met on his whole life, would ruin him! Without knowing the full truth, he had condemned him! It flashed into his mind that to rid the world of a man so vile would be an act of piety or virtue, a good deed, as good a deed as a man could do!

But murder, of course! ——! Had it come to this, then? He shuddered. Had his despair brought him so low? Had he sunk to where he could consider the killing of a man without horror?

He had aged whole years since Pennell had told him what he knew or what he imagined he knew. He had reached the crisis of his life. He did not know whom Pennell had written to. The owners, perhaps; more likely, Annie. Annie would not learn the truth; only what Pennell thought was the truth. And what could he do? Nothing. Write to Annie and tell her about Jack, his brother, and the woman who'd threatened to ruin him unless money was paid her! Write to Annie and tell her that he, her husband, had stolen money that didn't belong to him, to give to a harlot! Would Annie believe him if he said it was Jack the woman had sworn to ruin and not himself? Jack was the man who had married her favorite sister. She believed nothing against him. Jack was dead but he had made Mabel the happiest woman on earth, so Annie was always saying, while he lived. Happier than he himself had ever made Mabel's sister, of course.

Captain Gardiner wondered grimly how Mabel's marriage would have been regarded now had not Jack died. How long would Jack have been faithful to a girl like Mabel? How long would Mable have been able to hold a man like Jack?

He put on his overcoat to go ashore. He noted before leaving his room that the glass had fallen. The wind had risen.

In the engine-room of the *Honda* Mr. MacRae and the donkeyman still chatted easily, without restraint.

The ship was rolling.

"The old gal's beginning her pranks," said the donkeyman. "Shouldn't be 't'all surprized, Mister, if we got landed into a real snorter! It's the time o' year, anyway!"

Mr. MacRae glanced upward toward the gratings overhead where at any moment he might expect to see the second engineer come clambering down the ladder to worry him with his everlasting questions. Was he doing this, had he seen to that, and why wasn't he working at anything but what he was working at?"

"Donkey," he said, "are you interested in poetry by any chance?"

The donkeyman looked scared, and cast a quick, suspicious glance at him out of the corners of his eyes.

"Me, Mister?" he said. "——, no!"

He moved across the tilting, unsteady platform to the tunnel.

## XXVI

MOST sailors are pessimists. There were many pessimists on board the *Honda*. Two such opposites as the mate and the donkeyman in their respective spheres could for once feel that they had scored over their shipmates, their prophecies of bad weather having been justified by events.

The wind shifted suddenly to the north and increased in violence. Before dark the *Honda* was laboring heavily with big seas pounding her starboard quarter. The moon was hidden by dark storm clouds. Rain fell in heavy squalls.

At three bells in the second dog-watch Captain Pennell stood on the bridge in oilskins and southwester, one hand on the telegraph, the other on the bridge-rail, and peered through puckered eyelids into the gloom.

Mr. Pett, the mate, came to his side and cupped one hand and shouted so that he could be heard.

"Pretty bad! I was expecting this all along. I said it would blow, sir. D'you remember?"

The captain nodded.

"The glass has been falling steady ever since morning," said Mr. Pett.

The captain did not speak.

A sudden dislike to the mate made him silent. The fool, he thought. The —— old croaker! What did he mean by it? Didn't he ever realize other men weren't quite ignorant?

"Hatches all right, Mr. Pett?" he asked abruptly.

"Yes, sir, the hatches are all right!"

The mate resented the Old Man's question. He didn't know why, exactly. The Old Man was justified in asking, of course. But didn't he think any one else beside himself was to be trusted? Didn't he think the mate of his ship capable of doing his own work, without being told? Of course the hatches were all right!

"One bell, sir," said the man in the wheelhouse.

The mate struck the bell.

The forecastle bell answered.

"Going to get worse," said the mate presently. "I don't like this bit of water—never did. Treacherous!"

"Not so bad as the North Atlantic," said the captain.

"I've been in some pretty bad blows in the North Pacific, sir," said Mr. Pett.

"We've weathered worse than this is going to be, anyway!"

"Yes, sir. But you know the proverb about the pitcher and the well. Our hatch coamings are none too good. I hate those wooden hatches. On board the *Emerald Reef* did you notice they'd steel hatches? Wood and tarpaulin are out of date. Everything's out of date aboard the *Honda*, sir. Ventilators, for instance! Death traps, I call 'em. Those teakwood engine-room skylights! I tell you, sir, many's the time I've asked myself what would happen if we got a real heavy sea on top of 'em, a following sea, say, like we may have tonight!"

And at last Captain Pennell was angry.

What was the mate driving at? Was the soft witted fool advising him, trying to let him know that if he were in his place he'd turn her head round and heave to, and wait? Now! This sea didn't amount to anything. The mate was getting a bit too soft for his job.

"This is nothing, this sea," he said. "There's no need to worry, Mr. Pett! I know the *Honda* better than you do, I think!"

"Yes, sir," said the mate. "Yes, of course, sir!"

The Old Man was patronizing him, he was sure. But, all the same, he was right. It was running a risk, cracking on like this, with a following wind and a heavy sea, and getting worse each half hour. All the signs pointed to a howling gale. A living gale! Before morning it would be blowing like ——. And the Old Man didn't care a ——. The blasted old fool! Like that always, he was! Reckless, stubborn, self-opinionated! Bad tempered! Risking men's lives, that's what it was, and his ship, too! Just for the sake of showing the owners how well he could handle the ship, what fast passages he could make, blast him!

Nevertheless, so Mr. Pett reasoned, it didn't do to let the Old Man think he was scared. He wasn't scared. But there was the woman at home, and the kids, and at

times such as now it came over him that they weren't provided for. If he died, if he was washed over the side, if he was hit on the head, or slipped and fell on the iron deck—what had happened to the third engineer might happen to him—what hope would there be for Gladys and the children? Anything might go wrong on a worn-out old tub like the *Honda!* The owners were mean. Too mean to put their hands into their pockets and pay out their money to make their ships safe for the men who sailed in them. For himself, he reflected, he didn't care. Every one had to die someday; he'd risked his life hundreds of times in the past, thousands of times, without being afraid, but now—queer how being married made a man look at things in a different light—now he was afraid for the sake of Gladys and the children!

He mustn't let the Old Man get away with the idea that he had cold feet, though. That was wrong. Not fair on himself. He hadn't.

"No, sir," he said, "it's nothing I know, this bit of wind. And the *Honda's* a fine built craft. They don't build 'em as good these days, but I don't like the look of things at all."

"You're not attempting to advise me, are you, Mr. Pett?"

And now at last Mr. Pett was frightened.

"Good lord, no, sir! What would I attempt to advise you for, sir?"

"That's what I wanted to find out!"

Mr. Pett felt uncomfortable.

Mr. Moodie, the third mate, clambered up to the bridge, whistling softly. He saw the captain and was silent. He stood by the mate's side.

"All right, isn't it," he said cheerfully. "Reminds me of the seaside. Brighton on a windy day!"

"Don't try and be funny, Mister," said the mate. "One humorist's enough aboard any ship and while Mr. Torrance is out of the running give it a rest!"

"Eight bells, sir!"

The third mate struck the bell. The forcastle head bell answered.

The sound of the eight sharp strokes and the look out man's hail came faint and muffled against the wind.

"Better take the look out off the focsle head, Mr. Pett."

"Very good, sir."

"How is Mr. Torrance this evening, Mr. Moodie? Have you heard?"

So the Old Man had heard what the mate had said, had he! Mr. Moodie grinned.

"All right, sir, I think."

The man at the wheel was relieved. He gave the course to the new helmsman, who repeated it after him, then gave the course to the mate before leaving the bridge. The mate repeated after him in turn what he had said, according to immemorial custom, and then spoke to the third.

"Well, Mr. Moodie, I'll be getting along to have a bit of sleep. I'll have a look round the hatches first, of course." This last was for the benefit of the captain who gave no sign of having heard. "Sou'-west by west!"

"Sou'west by west!"

The mate stumped down the ladder heavily, feeling as usual after a conversation with the Old Man that he had been put upon and made to look small.

For a time no one on the bridge spoke.

A big sea swept over the starboard quarter on to the after well-deck. The bridge deck beneath the bridge was covered with white foam.

"Getting a bit lively, sir," said Mr. Moodie. He laughed.

The captain resented his laughter.

"Nothing to make light of, Mister. Weather's not likely to moderate just yet. Other way round, more likely. If it gets worse we're going to have a bit of a dusting!"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Moodie was serious at once.

"The *Honda's* not what you'd call a new ship. I don't like running too many risks with her. You can't do what you'd do with a modern ship fresh from the yards! Old-fashioned! Not up to date!"

Mr. Moodie felt that the Old Man was getting old. He was unnecessarily pessimistic.

## XXVII

IN THE engine-room the second engineer had not yet gone off watch. He stood on the platform, covered with slime and muck and grease, dressed in a pair of old overalls only, and wiped his bare arms and shoulders with cotton waste.

"Bilge diving's not a pastime I care for," he said grimly. "I swallowed a mouthful of the muck that pretty near' made me puke!"

The chief engineer said—

"It'll be a case o' crawling down that manhole on and off all night, Mr. Malone, if this goes on!"

"Those stokehold plates are old. Coal gets through. I said so about a thousand times. Pitching water and coal on to the tank tops. What else can we expect?"

"She's working better now," said the chief, listening to the *clack-clack* of the bilge pump. "Those strums will want plenty looking after, the way she's rolling!"

"Shipping 'em heavy, sir," said the donkeyman. "Hark at that!"

The chief nodded.

"When I die," said Mr. Malone, "you'll find engraved on my heart, if I have a heart, the words, '*Honda's* bilge pump valves and suction pipes!' Just that!"

Mr. Forester disapproved of Mr. Malone's attempts at humor, much as the mate on the bridge had disapproved of Mr. Moodie's. He did not laugh.

The donkeyman swabbed the piston rods and slide-valve rods.

He talked to himself.

"Ever-ry day I gotter do this same ol' job! Ever-ry day I gotter do this same ol' job. Ever-ry day I gotter do this—"

"Oh, shut up, donkey, for heaven's sake," said the chief. "Cut it out!"

Mr. Malone grinned. The chief spoke to him.

"Better nip off now, Mister, and get some rest while you've got the chance."

The second engineer went to the back platform and stripped to the skin and washed, mother-naked, in a bucket of condenser water under the drain tank.

The chief listened to a hum of higher pitch distinguishable among other sounds and said to the donkeyman:

"That fan's too high. It ought to be put back an inch and a half." He moved to the fan and shut it off a bit. "That's better," he said. "Much."

He walked to and fro, sniffing, worrying. He felt the I. P. guide.

"H'm! Heated. Donkey, look at that dark streak on the guide. See to it!"

He smiled to himself. He had once again scored over the donkeyman, who knew too much. As far as that went, he had scored over the second, as well. Decidedly he had scored over the second. He had spotted something that was wrong. He liked spotting things that were wrong when other men were to blame. It helped him. It made him feel good. The packing of the I. P. spindle rod, now, was leaking a bit. There was steam coming out. He'd speak about that in a minute. He glanced at the counter, then at the steam gauge. The steam had dropped. The firemen were cleaning their fires.

Mr. Malone, clean and pink, a towel knotted about his loins, his feet in slippers, paused at the foot of the ladder.

His round face looked anxious.

"It's worse than it was an hour ago," he said.

"Aye, it's worse," said the chief.

"We're going to have trouble."

"Aye, we're going to have trouble."

"You'll send word, Chief, if there's anything you want me to do, won't you?"

Mr. Forester grunted.

"You're —— right, Mister, I will!"

When Mr. Malone had gone, the chief sighed and knocked the ashes of his pipe out on the vice bench under the switchboard. He wondered why it was he was always so down on poor Malone. Was it because at heart he despised the man, or what? Did he despise him? He thought he did.

"Donkey," he said, "gimme that oil-can of yours. You have a look at those strums. I'm not satisfied we're not going to have a heap of bother with 'em tonight!"

Funny, but he felt more at ease with the donkeyman that he did with Malone.

Half an hour later as he stood in the shaft tunnel, adjusting the gland nuts, the huge shaft revolving smoothly, glittering in the glare of the electric lights overhead, he heard a dull booming sound that reverberated through the cramped steel space and for an instant he was too dazed, too startled to turn and make for the engine-room with its watertight door. His heart missed a beat or two, then went slowly, heavily, *bump*, *bump*, *bump*, and then galloped like the cranks racing.

There was a bitter taste in his mouth and he felt sick in his stomach.

He clung to the water service pipe and listened.

Something was wrong!

Never in all the years he had been at sea had he heard a sound quite like that hollow booming that came from somewhere beyond the confines of the tunnel; from the No. 4 hold, he decided, the starboard side. He tried to think dispassionately.

What could it mean? Anything! Nothing!

He wasn't sure.

The thought crossed his mind that the tunnel was like the pipe of an organ—a conductor of sound. In the tunnel one heard so clearly everything in the after part of the ship. The hollow booming frightened him.

And then suddenly he knew, just as though some one had told him, that a seam had started in the ship's side.

When he entered the engine-room once more he saw by the donkeyman's white face and staring eyes that he, too, had heard.

"Did you 'ear that noise, sir? Sounded like we'd hit something!"

"Princess' Landing Stage, probably! Of course we didn't hit anything."

He went to the speaking tube and called up to the bridge.

The captain's voice answered faintly.

"Everything all right, sir? This is the chief engineer!"

"All right, chief, yes. Pretty dirty night! O. K. down there?"

"Yes, sir. So far, anyway!"

## XXVIII

ALL through the long night the *Honda* rolled fiercely. At 4 A.M. the wind blew more strongly and the seas were higher than at any time since sunset.

Captain Pennell still clung to the rail as if he had not stirred hand or foot in the past eight hours—a square, thick-set figure in his oilskins and southwester.

He neither turned his head nor spoke as the mate climbed up to the bridge to relieve the second.

"How's everything, Mr. Hargreaves?" said the mate.

"So-so, Mr. Pett. We're shipping 'em good and plenty."

"Shouldn't be surprized if we were down by the stern!"

"We are down by the stern. There's a foot of water in the No. 4 hold bilge. I routed Chips out half an hour ago and he sounded."

"Hatches are all right, anyway," said the mate.

"They've got the pumps on, of course," said Mr. Hargreaves. "I bet there's —— in the engine-room just now! Don't you?"

"There's —— enough on deck," said the mate. He nodded toward the inert figure of the captain. "Been here all the watch?" he whispered.

"All the watch, and the watch before, too!"

He gave the course, then, and departed down the port ladder.

An hour passed. The *Honda* drove on before the gale. It was impossible to see the outline of the great seas in the pitch blackness. Their fierce onrush could be sensed by the masses of water that were flung against the top of the funnel and the wheelhouse, and the steep angle of the ship as the stern was lifted high up and the bow depressed and, laboring, she slid with fierce speed into what seemed a bottomless pit, so long was the descent, before the downward rush became an upward climb.

At two bells the captain hauled himself by the bridge-rail nearer the mate and screened his mouth from the rush of the wind and shouted—

"Given those hatches a thought, Mister?"

"I have," said Mr. Pett. "Went and had a look at them before coming up on the bridge."

Once again he was angry. Didn't the old fool give him credit for having any sense at all, or what?

The captain did not speak. He felt that if only he had turned the *Honda* head on there would have been less cause for anxiety. He was anxious at last. The violence of the gale exceeded anything he remembered.

It annoyed him to think that the mate had been right.

It was soon after five bells that the *Honda* was pooped.

A heavy sea surged over the starboard quarter on to the after well-deck.

The ship rolled slowly to port, the bow lifted, she rolled slowly to starboard and seemed to hang.

There was a sickening pause, a moment of hesitation.

"Hold on for ——'s sake!" shouted the captain.

With a roar like thunder a huge mass of water descended on to the poop.

The men on the upper bridge, clinging on with the grim tenacity of despair, their lives at stake, were overwhelmed by ice-cold water that swept their feet from under them, wrenched their numbed hands from their hold and passed on with irresistible momentum toward the bow.

Captain Pennell, stunned by the impact, lay on his face. Some one lay on his legs. He reached out his arms and groped with his hands and felt nothing before him and knew that he had escaped death by a miracle. The woodwork of the starboard wing of the bridge had been carried away, splintered to matchwood, scattered.

He gripped an iron stanchion and hauled himself to his feet.

A man was groaning from close at hand. The *Honda* was still heeling over to starboard as if unable to throw off the terrific tonnage of water that weighed her down. The end was near, he felt. They were sinking! He gazed aft into the darkness. No lights were visible from the ports of the engineers' quarters. There was no light beneath in the chart room. The light of the binnacle was gone. All was darkness. Emptiness.

"Are you all right, sir?" said the mate's hoarse voice.

He realized with a sense of shame that the mate was holding him by the arm.

"All right, Mister. Bit dazed. That fellow pooped us, I know. How much damage is there?"

"Back of the wheelhouse is stove in, sir. Helmsman knocked out. I think he's bad."

"I've got the wheel, sir," said Kinlan.

"The starboard wing of the bridge and the ladder are gone," said Captain Pennell. "Mr. Pett, get aft quick as you can and find out what's happened! Rouse all hands. I'll bring her head on soon's it's light enough."

Mr. Pett made his way down the port ladder to the lower bridge.

A quavering voice spoke to him. A man's shape was visible against the white paintwork of the lower bridge deck-house.

"——, sir, I thought we was gone, sir."

"That you, Armstrong? Go rouse up the crowd in the focsle! All hands. Tell the bosun I've gone aft to see what's happened."

He reached the bridge-deck, knee deep in foaming water swirling past, and the steward called to him huskily from the saloon alleyway.

"Is everything all right, Mr. Pett?"

"Everything's all right, Steward. Rouse up Mr. Hargreaves!"

"I'm here, Mister," said the second mate. "The third's coming."

"Hang on, then, till I find out what damage has been done aft! I've sent Armstrong for'ard for the hands."

"I'm coming with you," said the second mate.

"Like —— you are!" said Mr. Pett. "One's enough for that. See that the chief has all the stokehold hands he needs; send the third down to ask how he's making out. Understand! If things are all right, we can use 'em aft!" He shouted over his shoulder. "Get a hurricane lamp."

A piece of floating wreckage, a spar, part of a wrecked life boat, perhaps, was swept against him by water draining off the deck.

He fell, clinging to the life-line.

He gained his feet once more, swore, and staggered aft, clumsily, hindered by his sea-boots and oilskins, through the débris of smashed life boats and ventilators.

At the break of the bridge-deck he hesitated, appalled.

The darkness seemed to have lightened.

Astern the first faint signs of dawn were visible in the east. It was possible to make out dimly the wild fury of the foam-covered seas that roared down on the laboring vessel, like snow-covered hills at night.

The well-deck was awash. The howling of the wind, the fierce rush of the seas, the slow, uneasy rolling, the feeling of being alone, daunted him.

He was not afraid, yet he was afraid.

He plunged down the ladder into the white froth and chest deep floundered toward the No. 4 hatch, clinging desperately to the life-line.

A big sea submerged him.

He was under water, struggling for life, choking for breath, suffocating. He was dead!

Was he? Not yet!

He was being dragged from his grip on the life-line.

He wished, dying, he had been better and kinder and more considerate. He'd lied and he'd got drunk and he'd been unfaithful to Gladys! ——! To be given another chance! He'd never go wrong again! Never!

He came to the surface, alive, breathless, gasping, still clinging to the life-line.

"——!" he said. "Pretty near cold meat that time!"

He spat out sea water and felt better.

Above him the mainmast was visible, but the derricks had vanished, carried away, he realized, when the ship had been pooped.

Mr. Pett knew then how great must have been the force of that monstrous sea. That they were still afloat was a miracle. That the only damage was to the derricks was inconceivable. He feared the worst. The hatches!

He crawled around the No. 4 hatch coaming, fighting to keep his foothold, feeling with outstretched hands at cleats and wedges and the surface of the taut tarpaulin. He grabbed the barrel of the No. 4 winch and was swamped once more, overwhelmed by another sea, beaten to his knees. Again he scrambled to his feet. He fought his way to the No. 5 winch and on to the No. 5 hatch.

And then Mr. Pett found that what he had feared had happened.

The tarpaulin was in tatters, stripped and split from the wedges.

## XXIX

THERE was no need to venture on to the poop. Nor was there the time. The hatches were in danger. And if the hatches, their lives. The ship was in danger.

Mr. Pett turned and waded back along the portside of the after well-deck to the bridge-deck where he met the second mate with the boatswain and carpenter and a straggling of deck-hands.

"No. 5 hatch tarpaulin's in rags," he said gruffly. "Chips, go you and get those new tarpaulins. Take some one with you and—"

Before he could finish the vessel rolled far over to starboard and they were flung in a heap against the engine-room casing. Another big sea crashed over the starboard quarter on to the after-deck.

"Don't expect no one could live down there," said one of the hands in a muffled voice, "not with seas like that coming over yer!"

"You've got to try, anyway," said Mr. Pett on his knees.

The stern rose slowly, the ship now nearly broached to rolled to port, the men slid in a tangle of arms and legs and bodies into the rails under the davits.

"Look alive!" said Mr. Pett. "Hang on!"

Another sea caught the *Honda* amidships.

"——!" said the boatswain. "We're gone!"

They heard a terrific roar above them, the splintering of wood, an avalanche of water descended. They lay on the deck and clung to the rails, and were amazed to find they were alive and uninjured.

"She'll come up to her course in a minute," said Mr. Hargreaves. "Let's get busy, you chaps!"

"I've got to report to the captain," said Mr. Pett. "I'll be back as quick as I can."

"We can't go down on that well-deck," said the sailor who had spoken before.

"You —— well can and you will, my son!" said the second mate.

"It's murder!"

"It'll be murder if you don't, and —— painful at that!" said the second mate. "Come on, my sons, you don't want to drown sitting, do you?"

The mate scrambled through fresh wreckage toward the bridge.

In the dim light he made out the figures of men climbing about on top of the fiddley.

He heard them cursing.

One of them called down to him.

"Mister! Hi, Mister! Is it all right? Is it? For ——'s sake, tell us is it all right?"

"What are you men doing up there?" said Mr. Pett.

"Getting the fiddley battened down," said the man. "Cover's washed off. Stokehold's flooded."

"That there sea took two of the crowd that was up here with us overboard!"

The mate climbed the bridge ladder.

"Tarpaulin's ripped off the No. 5 hatch, sir," he said. "After-derricks have gone, sir. Lifeboats carried away, all of them, I think, and the stokehold's flooded!"

"Very good, Mr. Pett," said the captain.

There was no trace of fear or doubt in his voice. He turned and glanced aft toward the pale sky visible under the dark mass of storm clouds and the wild outline of the seas topped with foam.

"I'll have to risk it," he said.

The fourth engineer in singlet and trousers, bareheaded, wet to the skin, climbed the bridge ladder.

"Well, Mister," said the captain, "I hear the stokehold's flooded."

"Yes, sir. And we're flooded in the engine-room as well, but the chief engineer told me to tell you, sir, we'll manage!"

The captain grunted.

"Tell the chief we're going to try and put her head on to it. Tell him to stand by."

Again he turned and gazed at the huge following seas.

Already it was more possible to discern their shapes, their monstrous height and bulk, their length.

"Mr. Pett," he said, "away with you and get those men off the after deck for a minute or two." He spoke to Kinlan who had the wheel. "Keep your wits about you, and when I yell, jump to it!"

Again he gazed aft. The keen edge of the wind forced him to half close his eyes. He waited.

Kinlan swallowed and watched him in silence.

In the dim gray light, still dark, with the ship creaking and rocking and rolling, and the wind howling, and the seas, white with foam, roaring past, with only the two of them on the broken bridge, it was lonely and creepy.

Kinlan shivered and muttered a prayer and clenched his teeth.

Kinlan was frightened. The Old Man's face, now just visible, looked shriveled and hard and puckered and white, like a dead man's.

The howling of the wind had died to a shrill whining.

"Hard a-port!" shouted the captain.

The *Honda* was rising on a big sea.

Kinlan whirled the spokes of the wheel. The ship's head came slowly round.

The men clustered amidships on the bridge-deck felt helpless, in the grip of powers beyond human control.

The *Honda* wallowed deep in the trough between two rounded masses of water that towered up like mountains on either side.

How small the *Honda* was, thought Mr. Hargreaves. How insignificant!

Mr. Pett shut his eyes. If he died, he died.

"There's a girl at home," said Spadger clinging to the fiddley top. He broke off. "——, we're goin'!"

A mountain of water was bearing down on the ship with devastating speed.

Captain Pennell drew in his breath with a sigh.

Doomed now, of course. The end!

——! If only he hadn't written that letter to Gardiner's wife!

The *Honda* rolled slowly, deliberately over to port.

And then suddenly her head began to rise and came slowly, deliberately, round into the wind, climbing the steep slope of the hill, still rising.

A torrent of white foam swept over the forecastle head, just visible now in the gloom, on to the forward well-deck.

The *Honda* dived with a headlong rush into the hollow, head on to wind and sea, saved for the time being, at least.

Captain Pennell's forehead was damp with hot sweat. He felt weak and tired and, rather to his bewilderment, sleepy.

"Steady!" he shouted.

"Steady," said Kinlan. He added. "I can't see the card, sir. Mebbe it's north!"

Captain Pennell fumbled in the pocket of his oilskins and brought out his torch and flashed a light on to the dark binnacle.

"North by west! Keep the wind just abaft the starboard bow and you'll do!"

He rang the engines to "slow."

## XXX

ON THE after deck a length of bulwark plating had been carried away by the same sea that had carried away the derricks. Fresh life lines had been rigged. The deck hands were struggling to replace the hatches washed from the coamings, slipping and sliding on the iron plates.

The wind tore and tugged at the new tarpaulin.

In the engine-room the dynamo was out of action. By the dim light of slush lamps the engineers waded in oily water that swirled from side to side.

In the stokehold the firemen worked up to their knees in water which had reached the ash pits of the lower furnaces.

Men were fixing the plates that had given way. It was difficult to keep one's feet, difficult to throw the wet coal on to the fires.

Mr. Forester was too worried to pretend an optimism he did not feel.

He listened with strained attention to the low rumble of the cranks that now moved slowly, as if exhausted by what they had endured, and the clacking and clicking and stuttering of the pumps and the panting of steam, a discord of sound so different from the usual ordered smoothness that he loved that it was painful, and listened, too, to the deep, booming hollow note that he had detected before and had mentioned to no one.

Mr. Malone, smeared from head to foot

once more with grease and dirt and oil from the bilges waded toward him.

"I don't like it," he said. "You've heard it, Chief, I know. You've said nothing, but you've heard. Well, what is it?"

"What's what?"

"That noise? There, you can hear it now!"

"That, Mister! If you want to know what I think, that's the leak in the No. 4 hold."

Mr. Malone nodded.

"Yeh. Leak in the No. 4 hold. Water's gaining," he added. "No getting away from it. Say what you like, Chief, I don't believe the pumps can deal with it!"

"Stay here," said the chief. "I'll away to the bridge and have a talk with the Old Man."

The captain greeted him with a nod.

"How's everything now, Mr. Forester?"

"Pretty bad, Captain. We're not getting the water under."

"Engine-room and stokehold?"

"It's the No. 4 hold that's the trouble. You know we're down by the stern—"

"I've reason to believe so, Mister!"

Mr. Forester checked a desire to be angry.

What was the good of scrapping now, he felt.

"Well," he said, "there's a booming noise that means, in my opinion, sir, there's a seam started or some rivets! I don't like the look of things!"

"Who does?" said the captain gruffly.

He and the chief engineer were not friends, they did not even pretend to be. They stood in the cold gray dawn on the broken bridge and glared at one another, red-eyed and angry.

And why were they angry? The captain laughed grimly.

"Mr. Forester, never again will I go out of my way to do a kind deed to man, woman or child! If it hadn't been that I delayed sailing nineteen hours in San Francisco and risked my job and my reputation to bring the third engineer aboard, we'd have dodged this blow. Eighteen hours earlier we'd have run away from it—been so far west on our course, we'd have escaped. What's more, Chief, if I hadn't wanted to make up lost time, I'd probably have turned her head on to it last night! There's a confession for you if you like! And all through stopping to take the third engineer with us, all through that —— *Emerald Reef* crowd!"

"You're sorry you took the third aboard, then, are you?" said the chief.

Captain Pennell shrugged his shoulders. He indicated the sea by a gesture with his right hand.

"Look at it, Chief! Men's lives!"

"I've lost two firemen, swept off the top of the fiddley! Did any one tell you?"

For a moment the captain said nothing. Then he went on in a milder tone:

"Do your best, Bob, won't you?"

The chief engineer thawed.

"Aye, I'll do my best. We've got to. The boats have gone by the board they tell me!"

"Every —— one of 'em! Gig and all!"

The chief engineer clambered down the ladder.

The second mate, bleeding from a cut in the face, met him.

"Chief," he shouted, "what would you take for that farm of yours now?"

"Four bits," said the chief. "Two down, two on time!"

In the engine-room he found Mr. Malone arguing with the third engineer, white-faced and bandaged, but determined to work.

"Chief," said Mr. Malone, "clear him out of here. He's not fit to be out of his bunk!"

"Mr. Torrance, go back to your room. Sharp!"

"Chief," said the third engineer, "I won't. If I stay up there in that ——, moldy cupboard all by myself, I'll die! I'd as soon die on my feet down here, working. I'm feeling none too fit, I own, but let me have a whack at the dynamo! See! You can't order me back to bed, Chief, can you?"

"I can," said the chief, "but I won't."

"We'll need the dynamo, too," said the donkeyman. "You wait!"

"What the —— do you mean?" said Mr. Malone.

"Wireless," said the donkeyman. "We'll want all the power we got, presently! Don't tell me we won't, Mister. I know we will!"

## XXXI

IN THE *Emerald Reef's* pantry that led out of the starboard saloon alleyway the steward said to the second steward:

"Where's that lazy young 'ound, Sparks, got to? He's late for breakfast again. It's

twenty past eight. Nip up, Bert, and see if he's awake!"

The second steward made his way up to the portside of the lower bridge and knocked at the door of the wireless room.

Before the war the *Emerald Reef's* chart-room had occupied the whole width of the lower bridge, abaft the wheelhouse, which was never used except as a flag locker and room for spare stores. With war, however, had come the need for wireless, even on tramp steamers. The chart-room had been divided into two portions by a dividing wall, the portside portion becoming the wireless room.

Here at most hours of the day young Elswick, the wireless operator, a quiet, shy lad, was to be found seated in his swivel chair at his desk, wearing his phones, taking down the messages that came to him, or studying, surrounded by the apparatus of his craft—transformer, condensers, high frequency choke inductants, motor starter, regulating rheostat and main switch under the desk; the rotary convertor in its cabinet with non-synchronous rotary disc discharger; the two aerial tuning inductants, A.C. switchboard, the Bradfield overhead, charging switchboard, tuning board and lamp, earth arresters, emergency break, transmitting key, crystal receiver, low frequency iron-core inductants, earth bolts in the angle iron supporting the ceiling.

Opposite the desk at the fore end of the room was the bunk, thwartships and not fore and aft, a circumstance which, on board the *Emerald Reef*, was held to account fully for Spark's melancholy and reserve. It was reported that he never slept until seven bells in the morning watch, which explained, also, why he was persistently late for breakfast.

The second steward, therefore, having knocked twice and certain that he was still asleep, pushed open the door.

To his amazement, Sparks was not in his bunk but at his desk, fully clothed, his phones adjusted, and writing quickly on the pad in front of him.

"Ain't you never coming to breakfast?" said the second steward.

Sparks motioned him fiercely to get out and not bother him. The second steward went back to the pantry.

"He's takin' a message," he said briefly. "Got sore with me, too."

The steward grunted.

"The Old Man don't like him to be late for 'is meals, and he ought to know it by this time, too."

Captain Gardiner, however, made no comment on his wireless operator's absence. He sat at the head of the saloon table and, though this was his first meal since the *Emerald Reef* had left San Francisco at six the night before, ate with little appetite. His countenance was impassive. He kept his eyes down. He was, from his manner, not interested in what the mate and the second mate were saying to each other.

"We didn't get that blow they warned us was coming, did we?" said Mr. Humphreys.

"Some one did, I know," said Mr. Hollick. "We only skirted the fringe, the outer rim of the disturbance. Glass was low enough one time, all the same."

Mr. Humphreys nodded.

"I thought when I came on deck at four we were in for it."

"We've got a fine day ahead of us now, anyway," said Mr. Hollick. "Clouds have all cleared off."

Mr. Humphreys glanced toward the port opposite where he sat and saw the round patch of blue sky beyond the foremast.

"We ought to run into warm weather pretty soon at this rate," he said.

And then the conversation turned, as so many other conversations had turned in the past two days, back to the *Honda* and the fight between the two crowds and the incomprehensibility of everything.

"You don't find it quite so hard to eat, Mr. Humphreys, do you?" said Mr. Hollick.

"No," said the mate. He grinned ruefully. "My face is feeling more like a face. I'd like to meet the gentleman who broke my nose, though."

"Funny business, isn't it?" said Mr. Hollick. "You wouldn't have believed any ship could have signed on a crowd as tough and as blackguardly as the *Honda* did! I often wonder what the mate and the second engineer were thinking about when they went to the shipping office."

"And not a dago crew, nor Chinks, either," said Mr. Humphreys. "I always say if you want a real tough crowd, sign on at Cardiff or the Tyne, and you'll get 'em!"

"The *Honda* signed on her crew at Glasgow. That's bad, too, believe me! Tough nuts, those lads. Tough as they make 'em."

Captain Gardiner found himself listening to what they said.

Why were they talking about the *Honda*

again? Always the *Honda!* The *Honda's* crew! The *Honda's* officers! The fight with the *Honda!*

His brief freedom from worry had passed. Once more, full tilt, his thoughts went galloping away from him, out of control. Pennell would ruin him. That blackguardly little swine! ——, how he hated the swine! A man who would threaten to expose another man's sins and omissions, his past for the sake of revenging himself for a wrong inflicted by other men was hopeless! Impossible! That he had not been as guilty as Pennell supposed made no difference. He was guilty, not innocent. In the eyes of the law he had done what was wrong! Whatever hopes of happiness he might have had were lost to him now forever!

Pennell had written home. Pennell had said what he knew. Poor Annie, he felt. Poor Annie. It was hard on her.

"The second engineer can't use his hand yet. The wrist is all swollen. Suffers a good deal of pain, too."

"On the whole I think Mr. Ross came off worse than any of us did. Some of the hands look pretty badly marked, though. Have you noticed Martin by any chance?"

"Have I!" The mate chuckled.

All over the ship men still talked like this, about the *Honda*, about the fight in San Francisco, about the damage they had given or received and asked each other what would happen if for instance fate brought the two ships together on the homeward voyage, at Singapore, for instance, or Rangoon or Bombay!

Stranger things did happen, of course. Each day stranger things happened. If they and the crowd from the *Honda* met, then this time it would be a fight to a finish. There'd be no taking them by surprize now, the —— swines! This time some one would get killed for sure!

Captain Gardiner roused himself.

"Can't you give the *Honda* and that gang of blackguards a rest," he said gruffly. "I hope, Mr. Humphreys, in the future you'll talk of something else at meal times, or in my hearing anywhere. It's not a topic I take much interest in, personally. Everything that could have been said about the *Honda's* been said already, by you or by Mr. Hollick. Now, Mr. Humphreys, it's a mere matter of repetition. Boring in the extreme. Out of my hearing, as I said, it doesn't matter, of course. I hope I don't have to mention this again. Let's drop the *Honda*, once for all."

Mr. Humphreys reddened.

"Very good, sir," he said.

The old man was impossible, blast him! Life wasn't going to be worth living on board the *Emerald Reef* if a man was to be taken up like that and jumped on without any reason, just for saying what didn't do any one any harm.

Captain Gardiner glanced toward the doorway. The second steward started in his direction quickly.

"More coffee," said Captain Gardiner. "Did you tell the wireless operator breakfast was ready, eh? Don't gape at me! Did you tell him or didn't you? Why isn't he here, then? Go and say I expect him to be in time for his meals."

Old swine, thought the mate.

"Yes, sir," said the second steward. "Shall I get you your coffee first, sir?"

The captain glared at him. A dull red color mounted to his cheeks. He gripped the arms of his chair.

"Yes," he growled. "Get me my coffee!"

Before the second steward could escape—and he also was red—the wireless operator came down the companion at a run and entered the saloon.

He did not slide bashfully into his place at the foot of the table as was his custom but went straight to the captain and without a word slapped some slips of paper down by his side on the cloth and turned and hurried out again.

Captain Gardiner seemed about to shout after him.

He leaned forward in his chair and opened his mouth. Then he relaxed, picked up the slips of paper and read the messages:

From *S.S. Honda.* S.O.S. In distress. Down by stern. Leaking.

From San Francisco. *Honda's* position. 8:15 A.M. Lat. 35:55 N. Long. 125:48 W. In distress. Down by stern. Sinking.

From *S.S. Honda.* S.O.S. 8:20 A.M. Settling. Down by stern. Need immediate assistance. Lat. 35:55 N. Long. 125:48 W.

## XXXII

CAPTAIN GARDINER stared blindly at the penciled writing.

The *Honda* was in distress. Down by the stern. Sinking. In need of immediate assistance.

The mate and the second mate were

watching him. He must regain control over himself, not let them see how disturbed he was.

He drew a deep breath and passed his hand across his damp forehead.

The second steward had put the fresh cup of coffee by his side. He took the cup and drank. There was no sugar in the coffee. He shuddered. How bitter it was! And still he drank.

There was only the one thing to do, of course. Only the one thing to do.

Men were in danger of drowning. A ship was sinking. What difference did it make whether that ship was the *Honda* or not?

"Mr. Humphreys," he said, looking fiercely at the mate, "rather a strange thing has happened! The *Honda's* sinking." He rose to his feet and took up his uniform cap from the sideboard. "They've sent out an urgent S.O.S."

Mr. Humphreys was also on his feet.

"Are they far away, sir? Their course wouldn't take them near us, normally, I know. Are they far away, sir?"

Captain Gardiner said:

"They're bound for Yokohama. They'll take the southerly track this time of year. Not so far, Mister. No, not so far." He walked to the doorway and then hesitated. "If you've finished, Mr. Humphreys, I'd be obliged if you'd come to the chart-room. And, you might give my compliments to the chief engineer and say I'd like to speak to him, too, will you? Say it's important."

The mate did not follow him on deck at once but paused at the foot of the companion.

"Steward, better have some breakfast sent up to the wireless room!"

"So we're going after the *Honda*, are we, Mr. Humphreys," said the steward. "Lummy! We'll see them, after all, then," he laughed.

Mr. Humphreys hurried up the companion and made his way aft to the engineers' mess-room where the engineers were still at breakfast.

The chief turned and looked at him as he entered.

"Morning, Mr. Humphreys, and what brings you here so early?"

Mr. Humphreys answered him stiffly.

"Good morning, Chief. I'm sorry to disturb you at breakfast, but it's important. The captain would like to speak to you at once."

"Right. I'm with you." The chief stood up. "Lead on, Mr. Humphreys."

They passed through the portside engine-room alleyway out on to the bridge-deck and the sunshine and walked side by side toward the bridge without speaking.

Already the news had spread. Men were gathered together on the bridge-deck in groups, at the door of the fiddley and at the galley, all gazing eastward, as if they had hopes of seeing the sinking *Honda*.

Mr. Hollick came up the companion as the chief engineer and the mate reached the starboard lower bridge ladder.

"Seems impossible, doesn't it?" he said.

"Aye," said the chief, "it does."

Mr. Humphreys glanced at the stern, impassive face. Had he known all along, then?

"Captain's in the chart-room," he said.

He followed the chief up the ladder to the lower bridge.

Captain Gardiner was leaning over the flat-topped desk on which was spread the chart.

He raised his head and nodded.

"Good morning, Chief. Has Mr. Humphreys told you?"

"No, sir."

"The *Honda's* sending out an S.O.S. She's sinking and wants immediate assistance."

Mr. MacLennan folded his arms and whistled softly.

The captain once more bent over the chart. He picked up a pencil in his thick fingers.

"The *Honda's* position is latitude thirty-five, fifty-five, north, longitude one hundred and twenty-five, forty-eight, west. Ours is—" here he frowned and tapped on the chart with his finger tips— "ours is, as near as I can make it, latitude thirty-six, north, longitude one hundred and twenty-four, fifteen, west."

He glanced inquiringly at Mr. Humphreys, his eyebrows raised, almost defiantly, as if he was expressing a willingness to have him corroborate his reckoning yet was not in the least inclined to submit to correction or argument.

"That means," he continued, "that the difference in latitude is five minutes and the difference in longitude is one degree thirty-three minutes or ninety-three minutes." He scribbled the figures on a sheet of paper as he spoke. "And so we get the distance—" he frowned at the book in front of

him and turned a page— "seventy-five miles. You see, Chief, we're seventy-five miles away from the *Honda*. And so if we steer a course—"

He broke off once more.

"We've got to allow for the drift," he said. "Sou'west! The California current will see to that. Not much, but a little. And the wind. It was in the north, but I don't think it's that now, unfortunately!"

"Seems to have veered round a bit to the west'ard," said Mr. Humphreys.

And why didn't the Old Man make haste? What was wrong with him? Why didn't he lay off the course and have done with it?

"I hope it doesn't come on a hard blow, that's all," said the captain. "If it does, from the west'ard, it's going to keep us back more than I like to think of!" He straightened his back, just as if, thought the mate, he'd come to a decision, at last. "All right, then, the drift won't amount to anything very much yet. They'll get a noon observation, too. Seventy-five miles away! H'm."

He stared with brooding gaze at the white surface of the chart. His face was grim and stern, his lower lip was thrust forward stubbornly, his forehead was wrinkled, his chin, sunken on top of his low double collar, was compressed into folds of skin. His nostrils were contracted. He leaned on his elbows, his big, gnarled hands stretched out flat.

"We're running sou'west, aren't we. All right, then! West a half south will just about do it." He laid the ruler on the two tiny pencil marks. "Yes, west a half south will do it, just about! Mr. Humphreys, you might just put her on west a half south, please!"

Sparks stood at the door of the chart room. The captain held out his hand for the slip of paper.

"Wait a moment, Mr. Humphreys!" he said. "We'll see what they've got to say." He read the message aloud:

"From the *Honda*. Impossible to say how long we can keep afloat. Boats all carried away. Water in No. 4 hold gaining on pumps."

"Puir fellas," said the chief. "Boats a' gaun, eh!" He clucked his tongue. "That's bad."

"I thought there might have been some other ship nearer," said Captain Gardiner slowly. He sighed. "Chief, what speed am I to say?"

"We'll dae oor best to whack anither knot oot o' her. Eleven knots that wud be. Eleven an' a hauf if we can manage it. But wi' a heid wind I'll no guarantee onything!"

Mr. Humphreys, puzzled by the way the old man stared at him out of the corners of his eyes, was still waiting.

"It's queer," he said, "like fate, almost! The *Honda*, broken down, sinking, and the *Emerald Reef* going to her assistance."

"All right, Mr. Humphreys, that'll do," said the captain. "We're wasting time. Put her on west a half south!"

"Very good, sir," said Mr. Humphreys.

He left the chart-room, feeling annoyed—it was the old man who'd been wasting time, not himself—and ran up the ladder to the upper bridge.

## XXXIII

THE chief engineer and the captain were alone in the chart-room.

"He's a good lad, the mate, and he didn't get you! No mair do I," said Mr. MacLennan. "You look like a man sair stricken wi' bad news! Is onything wrang?"

Captain Gardiner uttered a little groan of despair.

"Mac, there's no thought in my mind of not wanting to do my duty, I swear to —— that's the truth, but I wish it was some other man's ship, not mine, that was the one that fate—fate was what the mate said, wasn't it?—that fate had picked on to save the *Honda!*

"Mac, no man's a saint. I'm not for one. Pennell knows something against me. I took some money that wasn't mine. Yes, Mac, it's the truth. I did. I paid it back by degrees, every penny. I thought I'd made everything all right. I hadn't. I thought nobody'd ever know what I'd done. I was wrong. I'm ruined. What's more, Mac, though I shouldn't have touched that money, no matter the reason why, my motive wasn't as bad as Pennell says. It was to save some one else, not myself, Mac, to buy off a woman who was going to ruin another man.

"That's the point. D'you understand? I paid the money over to a woman and Pennell knows it. No one would ever

believe me if it came out, as it must come out, and I said I did it for some one else. Pennell told me in San Francisco he'd written home. He has, I know. He's that kind. Stubborn, stiff-necked! What they call a man of his word. He'll break Annie's heart and think he's done right.

"And do you know why he's doing all this, Mac? Can you guess what made him tell a secret he's known for the past twenty years? It's because he's got it into his head we insulted him and his ship. It'd make me smile, Mac, if I wasn't so near to tears. A fact. Me, talking soft like this.

"The *Honda's* crowd, for no reason, attack my mate and my second engineer in the street in San Francisco, and the same night board my ship and beat up my crew, and the next day when I go on board the *Honda* to make a protest Pennell laughs at me and one of his men throws a steel nut at me and cuts the back of my neck open. If I'd been killed and I could have been killed easily, Pennell would have said I'd brought it all on myself. He would, Mac! I know him too well. A hard man. Pig-headed and stupid and hard.

"His men, for no reason, Mac, fight my men, take them by surprize, injure them on board my ship, mind! And then when my men pelt him and his —— ship with coal, he gets it into his head I was on board and encouraged them, and he tells me to my face in Market Street that because of something I did twenty years ago he's going to ruin me!

"What kind of a man is that? As bad as I am, eh? I think so, anyway! And now out of the blue there comes this appeal for help, after he's written home about what I've done, after he's ruined me, and I've got to lay a course across the North Pacific seventy odd miles to where he is, on a sinking ship. Queer isn't the word for it. I'm saving him, Mac, if the *Honda* doesn't sink before I reach him, and I hope to ——, Mac, for my own sake and what I'm going to feel like in years to come that I'm in time."

The chief engineer nodded his head.

"I know how you're feeling," he said. "It's hard on you, of course. Without asking the why and the wherefore we must do what's right! You have my sympathy and you have my respect, Captain Gardiner. You understand that, don't you?" He nodded and moved to the chart-room door. "And now I'll away down to the engine-room."

Sparks appeared with another message from the *Honda*.

What is your distance from us?

Captain Gardiner wrote once more.

Seventy-five miles. Speed eleven knots. Course west half south.

He said:

"You must have some one to take messages. You'll be kept pretty busy from now on, I expect." He leaned over the rail of the lower bridge. Below on the bridge-deck the mate was talking to the boatswain. "Mr. Humphreys," he said.

"Sir," said the mate.

"Tell off one of the hands to act as messenger for the wireless operator, will you, please!"

"Very good, sir," said the mate. He turned to the boatswain. "Where's that man, Martin? Send him up to the wireless room, bose, will you?"

Ten minutes later the *Honda* wirelessed:

Things very serious.

Captain Gardiner sent another message:

All being well hope to be with you by half past three.

Was his hope justified? He was worried. The wind was due west and rising. Suppose, now, that the chief's estimate was too optimistic. Suppose that their speed, instead of being eleven, a knot over normal, was less than normal, nine, say, or eight, or even seven!

Would they be in time, then, or not?

## XXXIV

IN THE engine-room the chief engineer had told the second, the third and the fourth what was happening, what they must do. He wondered how Mr. Ross would take the news, and looked at him quickly.

Mr. Ross merely nodded his head and said:

"A' richt, chief, we maun get to the puir fellas if posseeble! We'll dae oor best. If the bluidy swines hadna pit ma richt arm oot of action I'd ha'e been mair use, mebbe, in knockin' blazes oot thur firemen when steam draps!"

"We mustn't run any risk of a breakdown," said Mr. Jones, grinning uneasily,

"but what do you think we can get out of her, Chief?"

"That remains to be seen, Mister," said the chief. "If you look after your job, that's all that's required! There'll be no break-down. See? Not if you do your work. And now get busy and perhaps we'll show the chief of the *Honda* the old *Emerald Reefs'* engines aren't so dusty when it comes to a question of life or death."

"Blowing a bit, isn't it," said Mr. Wilson. "Is it going to be worse, I wonder."

"Aye," said Mr. Ross, "it's gaun to be waur! The *Emerald Reef* is nae guid drivin' against a heid wind an' that's a fac'!"

Mr. MacLennan made his way into the stokehold and spoke to the six firemen and three trimmers, the *Emerald Reef's* full stokehold complement, who were awaiting him.

"You've heard that the *Honda's* seventy-five miles off, sinking, no doubt," he said. We've got to get eleven knots out of the engines, if we can. That means —— good firing, a —— good head of steam!"

The firemen stared at him without comment, their faces serious.

"I'm going to ask for volunteers," the chief went on, "so that we can drop watches for the time being and work all hands till we come up to them and take them off! I've told the captain I can rely on the firemen doing their utmost!"

"That's right, sir," said the men.

One fireman, however, a dark swarthy man, called Watson, spat and said—

"Dae we get oor owertime, sir?"

"Owertime!"

The chief was gripped by an emotion that was more horror and disgust than mere anger.

"Owertime."

His sympathies were with firemen always. They had a hard life on coal burning tramps. But now, this Watson. To —— with his overtime! He passed into broad Scots dialect.

"What the —— are ye talkin' like that fur? What's it matter whether ye git yer owertime or no'? Are ye the like o' man wha'd let anither man droon when by exertin' yersel' ye cud save him? Ye hear men are droonin' an' ye say, 'Wull I git ma owertime?' Ye mak' me shamed o' ye! An' ye're a Scotsman, are ye no'? Red, o' coorse! Glesca' Red! A ship sinkin' an' men o' yer ain race, men o' yer ain' bluidy Union—aye, that's mair to the p'int, isna that sae—an' ye want owertime! Dae ye want me to bribe ye oot ma ain pooch?"

Watson, white-faced, advanced.

"Ye've nae richt to ca' me that! I'm Red, aye, an' prood o't! An' why not? You want a smack on the jaw, ye —— nigger driver."

Mr. MacLennan smiled grimly.

"I'm no' sae young as I was yince, but I'll tak' great pleasure, ma man, in knookin' ye doon if ye say anither word."

He might have hit Watson and been unhappy for ever after, so he realized, had not one of the other firemen stepped in front of him and with the flat of the broad-bladed shovel he held hit Watson a blow in the stomach that doubled him up and sent him stumbling backward on to a pile of coal at the feeder pocket of the starboard topside bunker.

Another man flung a bucket of salt water over him.

"They're a —— rotten crowd, the *Honda*, but they're no worse than Red here!"

"Watson," said the chief, "you'll keep your watch. That's the twelve to four, eh? An' that's a' that'll be required o' ye. Ye'll be the only yin o' the stokehaud haun's that winna be permittit to wark! Dae ye unnerstaun'? Up ye gang the noo an' sit by yersel' in the focsle. At twelve o'clock ye'll come doon here an' wark till four, an' ye'll no' set fut efter that till twelve midnicht, nae matter hoo haurd pressed we are! Up ye gang, ma man! Shar-rp."

Watson turned and climbed the long ladder that led to the fiddley and the bridge-deck.

He went to the galley where the cook was preparing the day's dinner.

"Hey, Mac!" he said.

MacLaughlin, the cook, another Scotsman, glanced at him as he leaned over the half door.

"Weel, what dae ye want here?"

"They're warkin' a' haun's i' the stokehau'd an' because I eskit wud we git oor owertime the chief dam' neir ate me! An' yin o' thur Cardiff hooligans hut me wi' his shovel! He did sae! But, Mac, I've scored ower the crood! The chief tellt me he wudna ha'e me i' the stokehau'd excep' when it wis ma ain watch an' sae the cr-ream o' the jest is I'm the only yin that disna ha'e to wark himsel' hauf deid!"

The cook snatched a pan of hot water from the stove near him.

"Ye low hoon'!" he said. "Whit did ye want to come here fur, tellin' me that? Owertime! Didna ye ken the auld chief weel eneuch to ken ye sudna gang eskin' questions like thon when mebbe the *Honda* is sinkin'? Gang oot o' here or I'll drench ye wi' this hot watter. An' dinna ye come hangin' roon' here again, ye white-livered skunk. Owertime! To —— wi' ye!"

Watson slunk off, muttering.

The steward came scrambling along the deck, steadying himself against the rolling.

He entered the galley and laughed.

"Funny how things happen, Mac! If ye've any doubts about us not coming up with the *Honda*, put them out of yer mind! I knew all along we'd not done with the crowd after that scrap we had with them, and I told the third mate last night just after we'd left 'Frisco we'd meet 'em before we was 'ome again. 'E said he'd bet me five to one in shillings we wouldn't! Superior he was. Very! You know 'is way, don't you? But 'ere we are, Mac, headed full speed for the *Honda*! I win my five shillings and tonight, Mac, you'll be busy in 'ere cooking beef steaks for another thirty, or whatever it is, extry hands! Do yer like the prospect?"

"Dae I, ——!" said the cook. "But I'm no' like Watson. I'll dae it willing. An' sae wud ony yin else. Aye. I met the cook o' the *Honda* yin nicht in 'Frisco, an I didna care fur the man. He's a blether. Nae guid. A low mindit, drunken foo'. Ma fingers were fair itchin' to gi'e him a skelp on the jaw. A' the same, I ken fine if oor galley wis floodit oot an' we'd had naethin' to eat, thon fat puddick wud set to an' wark like I'm gaun to wark, wi'oot ony arguin'. An' whit fur? Why? Human natur', that's a'! Ye canna help yersel' when it's a question o' savin' the lives o' the crew of anither ship!"

## XXXV

ON THE boat deck level with the engine-room skylights the mate and the second mate, the boatswain, the carpenter and the deckhands were overhauling the gear of the two life boats.

"It'll be night before we're up with them most likely." said Mr. Humphreys. "This —— head wind will have knocked a couple of knots off our speed. More, maybe. Tough, isn't it?"

"Aye," said the boatswain, "it's tough."

"We don't want to be fooling up here in the dark, fixing things," said Mr. Humphreys, "when we might as well do it now! And I don't want to find myself alongside the *Honda* in a big sea without any spare oars or a boat hook or lost without a sea anchor or compass."

"Not much amiss here, sir," said the boatswain. "Compass, lamp, matches, oil bag, mast, sail, red lights, bucket, biscuits, water, everything."

The second mate had left the No. 1 lifeboat and was plucking at the mate's sleeve.

"Mr. Humphreys," he said, "you're not going with the life-boat, are you?"

"I am," said Mr. Humphreys. "I'm going with the life-boat. It's my job, m' son, and I'm going!"

"Well, listen to me, Mister!" Mr. Hollick's face was red. "It's not fair on yourself! Why should you risk your life, when you needn't? Understand? I'm not much of a hand at expressing myself, but you're going to be married! We know that, all of us! Well, then, why not let me take the boat across?"

Mr. Humphreys was touched by the younger man's endeavor to put himself in his place.

He shook his head.

"No, Mister, if I shirked what's my duty, I'd not be able to face my girl. What's more, she'd never forgive me for letting you take my place. Do you understand?" He grinned rather ruefully. "She's proud of me, Maggie is, —— knows why! and I'm having a hard enough job living up to it without you putting temptation into my way. Understand? The job's mine, Mister, and that's all there is to it." He paused. "But I thought you were going to be married, too! You've got a girl as well as me!"

The second mate went pink.

"That's done with. She's married another man! Chap with more cash than I'm ever likely to have! I don't blame her!"

"I'm sorry," said Mr. Humphreys.

And he didn't know what else he could say.

On the lower bridge Chuck Martin, waiting for further messages from the wireless operator, spoke to Blooey Radkin,

relieved from the wheel at four bells, and on his way to the bridge deck.

"Hullo, Blooey, how goes it?"

"Fine, Chuck! Got a good job, ain't you?"

"Ah," said Chuck. "Have I! Brain work, me lad. That's what they chose me for. But it's a rum go, ain't it? That there ship sinkin' with the crowd aboard I hate more than any crowd I ever met up with. We'll take a life-boat across to them and we'll take them off, if they're still afloat, and after that—after that, mebbe, you'll see one of the juiciest scraps you ever set eyes on. There's two men from the *Honda* I'll sock the life out of as soon as we get 'em aboard. One's that thick-set, heavy built feller we had the turn up with in Webber's joint on Steuart Street night before last—no, night before that—and afterward cut me eye open, you know, after we'd quit fightin'. Said I'd stole something. Remember? The other's that fireman, Biddle. Remember Biddle? If those two are alive and well, s'elp me! me son, you'll see the father and mother of a scrap! If they're dead, well, I'm sorry for 'em!"

The *Emerald Reef* steamed westward under a blue sky, pitching heavily.

At noon a message was sent to the *Honda:*

Strong head wind holding us back.
If we carry the same speed we ought to be up with you by five o'clock. What is your noon position?

The noon position came back, only a little different from the morning's.

Shipping water and leaking badly. Make haste. Ship very low by the stern, difficult to keep pumps going.

Black clouds of smoke poured out from the *Emerald Reef's* funnel.

In the engine-room the four engineers and the three greasers, sweating in the heat, lightly clad, were hard at work, adjusting, oiling, feeling the moving parts, examining circulating, air and feed pumps, the evaporator and condenser, leaving nothing to chance, exercising an almost meticulous care in watching the gauges, water and steam and vacuum, making sure that the pressure of steam was not so high that the safety valves lifted nor so low that the vessel's speed suffered, even in the slightest degree, paying particular attention to valve and mud boxes and strums, and all the time keeping eyes and ears and nostrils on the alert for signs of overheating of top ends and bottom ends, piston rods, guides, crank pins, main bearings, eccentric sheaves and straps, and shaft bearings. While in the stokehold firemen, stripped to the waist, fed the furnaces on which in the end the speed of the *Emerald Reef* and the safety of the *Honda* depended.

The chief engineer was pleased.

"Guid lads!" he said. "Ye're daein' fine! An' ye winna lose by it, I promise."

"We're no' like bluidy Watson," said one of the men.

Just as the captain was leaving the saloon after dinner another message was brought in and laid by his plate.

From *S. S. Honda.* 12:30 P.M. Settling down by the stern. Make haste.

## XXXVI

IN THE west a long strip of gold showed between the dark storm clouds and the darker horizon. The sun was setting. The sea had moderated its violence, worn itself out, so it seemed to the men on board the *Honda,* but was still high and terrible to contemplate from the decks of a sinking ship. Long rollers swept down in endless succession, slow and smooth and oily, from the northeast.

The *Honda,* down by the stern, the poop awash, the forecastle head high out of the water, rose and fell sluggishly, with a heavy, sickening motion, without either life or buoyancy. Ahead, attached to the windlass by a wire cable and the starboard anchor chain there floated the remains of a sea anchor, constructed during the afternoon in the vain hope of keeping the ship into the wind. Forward, fish-oil dripped from a canvas bag filled with oakum through the starboard closet pipe and prevented the heavy seas from breaking.

Of the starboard half of the upper bridge only a portion of the iron framework was left. The wreckage of the wheel-house had not been removed. The woodwork of the starboard wing of the lower bridge had been staved in, as had the teakwood door of the chart-room, the door of the starboard saloon alleyway and the door of the starboard engine-room alleyway. Both the starboard upper and lower bridge ladders had gone; amidships the starboard and port-rails, both, were twisted and broken; all the ventilators, stokehold and engine-room, had been

carried away; a tarpaulin covered the broken engine room skylights; the only visible proofs that the *Honda* had carried boats were the crumpled davits and the fragments of the shattered gig lying on top of the No. 3 hatch between the saloon deck-house and the fiddley.

The galley had been flooded out, again and again, but a fire had been lighted and hot coffee served with cold ship's biscuit and salt beef for dinner.

On the poop the hand steering-gear had vanished with all the rails and the refrigerator. On the forward-deck the mate and the boatswain and carpenter were building a raft of spare spars lashed together as a last resource in case, as the mate put it briefly, of emergency. He thought it unnecessary to explain more fully what that emergency might be. Since dawn, when the big sea had pooped the *Honda*, seven of the crew of thirty-four had been drowned—the two firemen, washed off the fiddley, three deck-hands, one of the greasers and Mr. Hargreaves, the second mate. The survivors knew that at any moment, without appreciable warning, they too might go.

The *Honda* was sinking, slowly but surely. The lower furnaces were swamped. The main engines had long ago been stopped through lack of steam. The auxiliary engines were still running.

The water was gaining on the pumps, hour by hour. The ballast donkey was unable to cope with the flooded No. 4 hold bilge. The hand-pumps had been tried on deck without success and abandoned as useless.

Suppose the *Emerald Reef* did not arrive! Suppose they were not seen!

At four o'clock a message had been received:

Please send up rockets at four fifteen and repeat every five minutes. Cheer up! Am coming along fast.

It was now nearly five.

Why hadn't they seen the rockets? Surely they ought to have seen them. Was the sky still too light, or what? Against a background of dark cloud, they ought to be clear, anyway.

Men stood in little groups on the *Honda's* bridge-deck and talked listlessly in subdued voices or sat on the fiddley gratings and smoked and wondered when would come the plunge that would end their suspense.

The chief engineer, red-eyed, white-faced and haggard, walked slowly along the bridge-deck toward the bridge, bareheaded, wet through, exhausted.

The captain met him at the foot of the lower bridge ladder.

That meant that the end was near, thought the men watching them. No use hanging on down in the engine room. That was what the chief was saying. It was finished now. The plunge. The stern first dive! Well, what odds? Got a smoke, any one? Life-belts! ——! Who wanted to prolong the agony by wearing a —— life-belt? They laughed at the man who proposed putting one on.

The chief said:

"No, sir, I can't hold out much hope now. I've done all that's humanly possible. We've done, I should say. —— knows I've not done much myself. The water's definitely beaten us. It's rising fast. I've been using the bilge injection. No good. Slow but sure. The lower furnaces are out. The crank pits are flooded. If we're going to take that dive, Captain, personally I'd rather be in the fresh air. The others, I gather, are of the same mind!"

Captain Pennell stared at the stout, worried-looking little man with the straggly beard blown about by the wind and sighed.

"All right, Chief, bring 'em up! That's the end!"

A rocket soared up into the twilight from the bridge.

They watched the streak of light against the dark clouds overhead.

"They ought to be seeing those by now," said the chief. "I wonder what's keeping them. Any message lately?"

"The last was about half an hour ago. They wanted to know how many men we had on board. That's because they're calculating how many boat loads there'll be. One, I suppose. Well, they can't find us too soon to suit me. It's what you might call a worrying kind of business, this waiting, isn't it?"

The chief engineer hesitated.

"Captain Pennell," he said, "the open sea's a wide and terrible spot for a rendezvous. You don't realize how wide and how terrible till you're on board a sinking ship and another ship's trying to find you. You can be so near each other and not see anything except the sea. That's the part I don't like. Suppose we miss each other.

Don't ask me how much longer we can keep afloat. I don't know. I don't want to know. And now I've got to be getting down below again to tell the crowd to come on deck."

"Chief, I want to tell you this. It's through the engineers and firemen we're still afloat. The bridge and the engine-room don't always hit it off together, I know, but if we get out of this mess, I'll put it on record how much we owe you for what you've done."

Mr. Forester was quite embarrassed.

"That's all right, sir!"

The wireless operator hurried up with a message, smiling, chuckling.

Captain Pennell took the paper.

"Thank you, Sparks."

He read what was written:

Have seen your rocket. Am bearing down on you. Keep smiling.

The hands, watching him, saw him laugh and whispered:

"Good news! Look at the Old Man."

"Mr. Forester," he said, "they've seen our rocket!"

The men heard.

"They've seen our —— rocket," they said. "See the Old Man grinning."

## XXXVII

MR. FORESTER hurried down the ladder into the flooded, dreary engine-room and nodded to MacRae, the fourth engineer, and the donkeyman and the other greaser who watched him with eager eyes from the platform, but he neither spoke nor stopped.

His first duty was to the firemen. The others could wait.

He passed between the center and starboard boilers, wading knee-deep in water, into the stokehold.

Malone, pale and grim and fierce-looking, and the firemen stood and stared at him as he entered.

"Well," said Malone.

"Up you get! It's all finished down here! The *Emerald Reef* has seen our rocket!"

"Thank Gawd," said the firemen.

Released from what they had told the second engineer with brutal insistence was likely to be his bloody coffin as well as theirs, and why the —— didn't he let them go? They scrambled for the ladder.

The chief turned and went back to the engine-room, Malone splashing after him.

"All over," he said. "Up you get!"

The greasers climbed the ladder.

Mr. MacRae followed slowly.

"Anything you'd like me to do, Chief?" said Mr. Malone.

"Not a thing, thank you, Mister, not a thing!"

As Mr. Forester climbed the ladder, the last to leave the engine-room, as was his right, his eyes were blinded with tears.

He halted at the middle gratings and peered down at the water swishing about from side to side in the darkness, illumined faintly by the colza oil-lamps still burning dimly, and the thought came to him to climb down the ladder once more and extinguish the lights and permit his poor old engines to die in the dark. And then a sudden panic swept over him. Suppose that the ship took her dive when he was down on the flooded platform; suppose that happened, and he was flung headlong against the engine-room bulkhead and—

He climbed quickly to the top gratings above the cylinder tops where he found Mr. MacRae waiting for him.

"I've just been thinking, Chief, that there's some kind of invisible link between us and the *Emerald Reef*, something that's bound us together!"

Mr. Forester was in no mood for young MacRae and his fancies!

Would a man who had seen some one near and dear to him die listen to stuff like that? He had said good-by to his engines. MacRae talked about missing links and stuff like that!

"Mister," he growled, "get you to your room before you're flooded out and get into the warmest, thickest, driest clothes you've got! You're going to have a trip in an open life-boat, if God's good to you! And as many men have died through catching their death of cold as through being drowned!

Mr. MacRae felt that the chief was an offensive old swine! That another ship, a ship that they had such cause to despise and hate, should have been summoned to their assistance by wireless, messages through space, sent out at random, seemed to him the most romantic and thrilling thing he had ever imagined! And the chief babbled about warm clothes! The —— old fool!

In the engineers' mess-room, Mr. Torrance, the third, wrapped in an overcoat,

slept with his bandaged head pillowed on his arms on the table.

Mr. Malone glanced at him through the doorway.

He had intended to wake him. And then he decided not. There was a chance they might sink before the *Emerald Reef* came up with them. He would wait till then. He would be with him when they made their dive. If he woke, he would be by his side. If he slept, so much the better, he would die without waking.

The sun had set. The afterglow was a dull crimson. Dark clouds drifted across the sky from the north-east. In the east the moon was rising.

The hands were seated on the fiddley, sheltered by the funnel from the wind.

"I wish to Gawd they'd come," said Spadger. "I never wished for anything so much in all my life as that blasted *Emerald Reef!*"

He thought:

"At any minute the stern may go down and the bow will stand up, and ——! that's the end of it!"

"It'll be like meeting old friends," said Mears. "Funny, I never imagined I'd be kind of glad to see even them blokes! I will be, you bet!"

And he, too, thought:

"In a minute, like, the bow's going straight up in the air and the stern's going straight down, and we'll be cold meat, the —— lot of us!"

Spadger said:

"There's a feller aboard the *Emerald Reef* they call Chuck. I ain't got much reason to like him, seein' the way 'im and me fought, but I got it into me head he'd pinched me wallet! He hadn't. The second engineer said it was picked up on the floor when him and me had that scrap and I gave him a licking! But I called him a thief and I shouldn't have. Soon as I see him I'll tell him I'm sorry."

"How do you know you're going to see him at all," said Biddle, the big fireman. "Will we last out till they come? We're settling down now, ain't we? And fast! Suppose we dive! What then?"

He said out loud what each of the other men had in his mind. They ——ed him and told him to shut his —— mouth. He smiled and said nothing. Armstrong spat and said:

"It'd be awful if they'd made a mistake in their reck'nin'! Awfuller still if they'd been tormenting us, like. You know! Suppose they said, 'We ain't going to rescue a crowd o' dirty tykes like them, and turned!"

"Who's a crowd o' dirty tykes?" said Spadger sharply.

"Not us," said Armstrong. "But that's what they'd call us!"

"You got no right to call your own shipmates a crowd o' dirty tykes!"

"Some one give that —— fool Spadger a wipe over the jaw," said some one. "What Biddle said is right. Any minute we may go, blast you, and there you are, —— you, talking about dirty tykes! I want to think up a bit of a prayer before I go!"

No one laughed. Tanqueray spoke under his breath to Armstrong.

"We'll see those fellers we had the scrap with on California Street. But they won't see all of us! Not they! Poor Pat Kinlan! Remember the way he went for that Scotty! ——! And now he's dead! One minute we was side by side, passing a lashing over that hatch, the next we was under water, and when the water had gone, he'd gone, too! Without a word! Hard-like, wasn't it! And old Tom Hull and Berry. Don't mind much about them! I met Berry's wife once, and she was ——! But Kinlan! Well, it's hard, ain't it!"

"Wish to Gawd we could see some sign of 'em," said Spadger.

Another rocket shot up from the *Honda's* bridge.

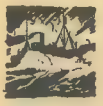
The men stared anxiously toward the east where the moon was rising and then they rose to their feet and yelled and cheered and screeched and cursed and slapped each other on the back and waved their arms above their heads, frantic with joy and excitement, for there against the dark clouds soaring into the air was a rocket.

The *Emerald Reef* had seen them!

The *Emerald Reef* was nearer than they had dared think!

They were saved!

## XXXVIII



CAPTAIN PENNELL stood by himself on the lower bridge. His mood was somber. Perhaps they were saved! Perhaps they could keep afloat until the *Emerald Reef* was up with them! But perhaps they couldn't! Even now there was time for that dive that he dreaded to think of!

The raft! What good was the raft?

A message was brought to him by the wireless operator.

"Just come in, sir. From the *Emerald Reef*."

He read what was written, "With you very soon now," and nodded, unable to speak.

The minutes dragged.

It was not yet dark. In the west the afterglow was a pale yellow; in the east the orange moon, seen between the slow moving clouds, cast its reflection on the great masses of water that came sweeping past the *Honda*.

Some one yelled:

"There, fellers! There, by ——! Look! I see her! Look!"

Captain Pennell, leaning on the rail, saw high up on the crest of a ridge of water the outline of the *Emerald Reef*, ghost-like in the twilight, a phantom ship, her side-lights and mast head-lights showing. She vanished into the trough between two big seas, only the black smoke from her funnel visible.

His eyes were blinded with tears. He felt at last there was hope.

The mate, Mr. Pett, was by his side, grim and saturnine, even now.

"Looks like being saved, sir," he said gruffly.

"Yes, Mr. Pett, it looks like being saved, after all. It's funny, the *Emerald Reef* being the one ship to get our S. O. S., isn't it? The one ship to answer it, anyhow, and come to us."

He only said what every one else on board the *Honda* had said already in one form or another that day. Mr. Pett had said the same, himself, to any one who would listen.

Captain Pennell sighed and continued in a low voice:

"A man says things sometimes in the heat of temper that perhaps in his calmer moments he wouldn't dream of saying. I don't know, Mr. Pett, but it seems to me, as I've grown older, I've grown impulsive. And I've never acted impulsively yet without feeling afterward I'd done what was wrong."

Mr. Pett wondered what in blazes the Old Man was driving at now. He was, he felt, tired and talking without knowing quite what he said.

Captain Pennell leaned on his elbows on the rail and held the palms of his hands to his face and thought.

Why had he written that letter? What good would it do? Captain Gardiner would be ruined! He deserved to be ruined! But did he? Who was he, George Pennell, master mariner, to judge others? Had he been without sin, himself? He hadn't, he knew. There were things, he reflected, things he'd done which, looking back, made him sick to contemplate.

He had permitted himself to be dragged into a course of action by rage, by a sense of being ill-used; dragged into doing what now his better nature condemned as degrading and dishonorable.

What man with any respect for himself would deliberately write to another man's wife and tell her secrets that would destroy whatever respect she might have for her husband?

He must have been out of his mind; for the time being, insane.

And now the man whose life he had smashed, who might never be happy again, was going to save them!

Again Captain Pennell sighed.

And what happiness would there be for himself, after this? Captain Gardiner, he felt, had not been on board the *Emerald Reef* when the hands had pelted the *Honda*, after all! He had spoken the truth. It was Pett, the man by his side, who was wrong!

"Mr. Pett," he said suddenly, "I suppose Captain Gardiner was on board the *Emerald Reef* when they threw the clinkers at us. There's no mistake, is there?"

The mate glanced at him in a puzzled way.

"I don't know, sir. Why?"

"You said you saw him!"

The fact of the matter was, thought Mr. Pett, the Old Man was off his head. Mad as a tomcat!

"Me, sir! Well, if I said I saw him, I must have seen him. I don't want to make mischief, sir, now that there's every chance of our keeping afloat till they come up with us, by raking up old sores, etcetry, so I'm perfectly willing to say I made a mistake!"

Captain Pennell uttered a little groan.

What kind of a man was Pett? Did he talk for the sake of talking or not?

"All right," he said. "It doesn't really matter, Mr. Pett!"

The men watched the slow approach of the *Emerald Reef*. It was apparent that the *Honda* was settling. The angle of the

deck was steeper now than when they had seen the *Emerald Reef's* rocket. A little, not much, but steeper, undoubtedly.

The strain of waiting, the uncertainty, the knowledge that even now, with help at hand, without warning, the *Honda's* stern might dip and the forward-deck and the forecastle head rise up into the air, high above the level of the funnel and the fiddley where they clustered, and fling them, like flies, into the sea, wore on their nerves.

But the *Emerald Reef* was nearer.

It was possible now to distinguish the band on her funnel, the pale blue band that in the gathering darkness seemed white.

From the bridge there flashed out the dot and dash of a Morse lamp message:

We are going to lower a boat.

Mr. Pett spelled the words out slowly.

"Right," said Captain Pennell. "Let them know we understand, Mister!"

He called to the men on the bridge deck.

"They're going to lower a boat!"

"Thank God!"

There came a sigh of relief, audible where he stood on the lower bridge.

The second engineer hurried into the mess room where the third still slept, his head pillowed on his folded arms.

"Wake up, Eddie, m' son! The *Emerald Reef's* going to lower a boat."

Mr. Torrance sat up and blinked in the darkness and laughed.

"——! I thought I was home. It's you, is it, Mister? The *Emerald Reef's* going to lower a boat, eh!" He laughed once more. "Then I'll see my stout friend in the pajamas again! I wonder if he'll be wearing 'em when we go aboard!"

## XXXIX

CAPTAIN GARDINER, stern and impassive, impassive, outwardly, at least, stood in the starboard wing of the *Emerald Reef's* bridge. Darkness was falling. Rain clouds drifted across the sky. The sea was still high. Ahead, against the stretch of pale sky that marked the last traces of the after glow of the sunset, was the *Honda*, low in the water, sinking. Astern the moon had risen clear of the horizon.

The *Honda* was flashing a lamp message.

"What's that they're saying, Mr. Ovenden?"

The third mate said—

"They're saying they're glad to see us and that they're settling fast."

The mate ran up the bridge ladder.

"The boat's swung out, sir. Shall I take it away now, sir? Everything's ready!"

Captain Gardiner turned and stared at the younger man's spare, brown face, with its steady eyes and firm mouth and bandaged nose, and he wondered why he, of all men, should to all appearance be so eager to risk a life that was valuable not so much to himself as to the girl at home, waiting.

"You, Mr. Humphreys! Why not Mr. Hollick?"

"No, sir, it's my job, sir. We argued the matter out earlier in the day, sir. It's my duty to take the boat!"

"Have you told the chief engineer?"

"No, sir. What's the chief engineer got to do with it?"

"You're going to marry his daughter!"

"That's nothing to do with my taking the life-boat across to the *Honda*, sir."

The captain nodded.

"Very good, then."

And after all, he reflected, the mate was the better man, the steadier, the more reliable; he would sooner trust him with men's lives than he would the second.

"One journey, do you think, Mister?"

"One journey, sir. The starboard lifeboat is the one we'll use, of course. Certified for thirty-four. The *Honda's* got twenty-seven men left. I'll take five across with me. That makes thirty-three. A tight fit, but we'll do it!"

"All right, Mister. All right, then."

Captain Gardiner made an effort to forget himself and his troubles and what would happen to him in the near future: disgrace, ruin, unhappiness, estrangement from Annie, and unbent sufficiently to say:

"Go get your boat's crew and I'll stop the engines when you're ready. Good luck, Mr. Humphreys, and a safe return."

"Thank you, sir!"

The mate hurried down the ladders to the bridge-deck where the deck-hands had gathered to watch the sinking ship.

"You there, bosun?" he said. "All ready?"

"Aye, aye, sir. Rudder shipped, painter made fast!"

"Right! You and I, that's two. I want four more for the lifeboat! Who's coming?"

The men surged toward him.

"Me, sir! Me."

"I'll be one of them, sir."

"Let me, sir."

"No married men," said Mr. Humphreys. "Martin, you'll be one, Radkin, another. Penny, you'll do. And—" Mr. Humphreys looked at the eager faces in front of him and was about to nod to another of the deck-hands when a man thrust himself forward through the crowd, a dark, black-haired fireman in singlet and trousers, bare-headed, dirty and pale and angry— "Well, what do you want?"

"Me, I'm gaun i' the lifeboat. Watson's ma name. Ye ken, Mister, I can pu' an oar wi' the best o' them. See! They winna let me stop doon i' the stokehau'd, they kickit me oot. An' fur whit? I wantit ma richts. It's ma richt the noo to show I'm as guid as ony yin else aboard! I can gang wi' the boat, Mister! Wha's gaun' to stop me?"

The chief engineer spoke from the back of the crowd.

"I'd take him, Mr. Humphreys. He can handle an oar, I know."

A certain desperate eagerness in Watson's face made the mate nod his head.

"All right, Watson. You can come along. Get a life-belt! Hop in, you men! Look sharp!"

On the bridge the captain rang the telegraph to stop.

"All ready, Mr. Humphreys!" he called.

"Aye, aye, sir, all ready!" said the mate.

"Dan," said the chief engineer, "in spite of a' I've said to ye, ye're gaun across to the *Honda!*"

"Yes, Chief, I must."

"Wull ye ne'er learn wisdom? Is it fair on Maggie? I was richt, efter a', ye're no' fit to mairry her!"

"Chief, if Maggie were here now, if she knew, she'd tell me to go!"

"Ye're a stubborn lad," said the chief. "Ye'll aye ha'e yer ain way. A-weel. Guid luck, Dan, an' pit oot yer mind what I said to ye at San Francisco. It wasna yer fault that he had to fecht, I ken fine!"

They shook hands.

Again the captain called:

"Make haste, Mr. Humphreys! What's keeping you?"

Mr. Hollick, the second mate, said:

"Everything's all ready, Mister! You wouldn't care to change your mind even now, would you, and let me go instead of you, would you?"

"I wouldn't," said Mr. Humphreys.

He climbed the perpendicular iron ladder on the engine-room casing to the boat deck and took his seat in the stern of the life-boat.

"All right, Mr. Hollick! Lower away!"

## XL

THE sea swept up to them as the life-boat dropped. As they reached the surface of the water Mr. Humphreys unhooked the stern block and shouted:

"Leggo for'ard! Out oars, sharp!"

He sheered the boat out with the rudder.

"Give way, m' sons! Hard as you can!"

They were clear, away from the lee made by the *Emerald Reef's* hull, out in the open, headed toward the *Honda*, with the cheers of the men left on the *Emerald Reef's* bridge-deck still echoing in their ears.

Spray swept over the gunwale and drenched them.

"Stick to it, m' sons," said the mate. "Martin, keep your eyes in the boat!"

The wind was with them, keen and cold; the sea that had seemed no more than moderate from the bridge of the *Emerald Reef* was now, seen from the level of the lifeboat's thwarts, monstrous. At one moment they were hidden between great slopes of water, with the stars shining overhead in the gaps between the dark, heavy clouds, the next they would be high up on the crest of a great roller, with the moon astern, round and golden and huge, and the *Honda* in a direct line ahead, settling low in the water, and flashing a lamp message, dot, dash, dot, impossible to read now, with the white foam tearing down level with the gunwale and all one's care needed to put the helm up at the right moment so that the life-boat might pay off and avoid the risk of being swamped by the big seas that again and again threatened to sweep over them.

"Put your backs into it, m'sons!" said the mate. "Not a long pull now! You're doing fine!"

The knowledge of what the sea was capable of doing to them if he relaxed for one instant his vigilance, if he were careless, tormented him.

He was responsible. No one else.

He thought of Maggie at home, waiting

for him to return to her. He thought of the chief, Maggie's father, who hadn't wanted him to take the boat across to the *Honda*. He thought of the Old Man back there on the bridge, watching their slow progress. He thought of the *Honda's* crowd, also watching them, with what feelings tearing at their hearts they alone could tell. He thought of the men with him—the boatswain, queer-tempered, humorous, cynical, a man who ought to have had his ticket but had, as he himself expressed it, no head for figuring, a sound man, a good man to have with one in a tight corner; Chuck Martin, the big-chested deck-hand, with the grin and the twisted nose and the long upper lip and the twinkling eyes and the laugh; his pal, Radkin—Blooey, they called him, —— knew why—who'd been with him that night, three nights before, and it seemed half a year, in the fight on California Street when they'd been set on by the crowd from the *Honda;* Penny, the old windjammer man, who despised steamboating; and Watson, the fireman, Red Watson, they called him, Glasgow Red, the Bolshie, who'd had a scrap in the stokehold that morning, so it had been rumored. ——! That was a big one! If that had got them, that sea, they'd have been finished. Had he been careless, thinking of other things? He did not know.

Sometimes a sea was so terrible, no ship's boat could live in it one second! But not this! And he had to live, for Maggie's sake and the *Honda's* sake! If the boat went now, swamped, turned beam on to the sea, one of those —— big seas that seemed to rise up above them like the hills at home, the curve of the grassy downs, the moon rising, the lambs crying, what hope would they have had? Life-belts! ——, what use were life-belts?

"Not far now," he muttered. "Keep at it, m' sons!"

Chuck Martin, tugging at the stroke oar, grinned.

They were going to rescue the *Honda*, he thought. Going to take off the *Honda's* crowd! How queer it all was when you come to think of it! Too —— queer for words! He wondered what it would feel like to meet the men that he'd fought with and thought he'd hated, but didn't really hate at all; not now, he didn't! They were good enough chaps in their way, he supposed; as good as some of the crowd on the *Emerald Reef*, perhaps, but queer. Whatever had made 'em pick that quarrel and board a ship without having a reason and fight. Queer, that, too; they'd fought, all the lot o' them, half killed each other, but now, when they met, they wouldn't fight!

Watson, the fireman, was thinking. He'd show 'em! He was as good as they were! He could pull an oar with the best of 'em, he could. What had he done what was wrong? Nothing! They'd turned on him, they had, all the bunch!

Owertime! He didna want owertime! The money was naethin'! He'd wantit to show the chief, blast him! He had his richts the same as ony yin else! And the chief had kickit him oot the stokehau'd an' wouldna let him wark wi' the ithers, an' if they got owertime he wudna! Weel, he didna care! He'd gaun wi' the boat! He was as guid a man as there was aboard the *Emerald Reef* an' he'd prove it, he wud, as sune as he cud, by fechtin'! Aye, he'd fecht ony budy aboard, he'd fecht ony twa o' them, if they liket, an' beat them, he wud!

Blooey Radkin wondered if there'd be a drink when they got back to the *Emerald Reef*. A nip o' rum now would go down prime!

Penny had no particular thoughts in his mind, save it was —— hard work, pulling. He'd been a fool not to let one of the younger men have his place in the boat! But what good were they? No good at all! If the mate had had to depend on the youngsters, they'd never get nowhere! It took the old-timers to pull a boat, the old windjammer men! To —— wi' steam!

The boatswain wondered what kind of a lee they would find alongside the *Honda* to shelter them. Not much, he knew. It wouldn't be too —— easy taking the crowd off, anyway.

"Stick to it, m' sons!" said the mate. "That's the style! We're just on top of them now! Bosun, look out for them heaving a line!"

## XLI

AND so they were saved at last! The boat from the *Emerald Reef* had reached them.

"Give them a cheer, fellers!"

The men on the *Honda's* bridge-deck cheered and grinned and moved their cramped limbs and prepared for their journey across that wild stretch of open

sea to where the *Emerald Reef* was slowly steaming.

How small the life-boat looked! Was it large enough to hold them all in the one trip? It must. There couldn't be any staying behind now! The old *Honda* was going. The after-deck was awash, level with the bulwark rail. The bow was high up. ——! If it tilted much more—

The life-boat was alongside now, amidships, on the starboard side. Lines had been thrown and secured.

The mate, the *Emerald Reef's* mate, in the stern—they remembered the mate the night of the fight, most of them—shouted:

"Jump when you get your chance! No time to waste!"

Mr. Pett said gruffly:

"Jump, you men! No good playing the fool now! Jump!"

They climbed the rail and jumped, by twos and by threes, as the life-boat was tossed up toward them.

Spadger missed his footing, slipped, and fell into the water. A man dragged him over the gunwale by an arm and a leg, and when he saw him laughed out loud.

"Hullo, here's one old friend, anyway!"

And Spadger, opening his eyes, saw the man called Chuck who had fought him in Webber's joint in 'Frisco and lay in the bottom of the boat, gasping for breath.

Mr. MacRae, a paper package under his arm, balanced himself on the rail and jumped. His feet landed on the gunwale, as the boat was rising. He would have fallen back into the water had they not caught and held him.

Some one grabbed at the package that had slipped from his grasp.

"Thank God!" he said.

"What's in it?" asked the wireless operator.

"My poems," said Mr. MacRae.

"You ought to be locked up," said the third mate. "Poems, by ——!"

And now only the mate and the chief engineer, and Mr. Malone and Mr. Torrance and the captain remained on the *Honda's* deck.

Mr. Torrance was feeling sick.

It didn't matter, he felt, whether he went or not. His head hurt him. He was very sleepy and tired.

"There's no —— room for me in the boat," he said. "See! I'm not coming. No room! It's too crowded already!"

"For ——'s sake, Mister, make haste," yelled the men in the life-boat. "She's going fast!"

"I'm not coming, I tell you!"

"By ——, you are!" said Mr. Malone.

He seized his friend around the waist in his big arms and lifted him on to the rail. And then they fell, the two of them, locked together, into the water and were dragged, as Spadger had been dragged before them, into the crowded boat.

The mate and the chief engineer jumped.

The captain, a leather despatch case under his arm, stood looking down on the boat.

"All right," he said.

He put his leg over the rail, waited a moment, drew the other leg over, then let himself drop.

Chuck Martin thrust out his hand to save him from falling. The life-boat was lifted up and crashed against the *Honda's* plates.

An excruciating pain shot through Chuck's arm, nipped between the lifeboat's gunwale and the side of the ship.

He gave a cry and collapsed.

"What's the matter, chum?" said Tanqueray.

"Take the oar, mate, me arm's broke," said Chuck.

"Leggo for'ard!" shouted Mr. Humphreys. "Give way, hard as you can!"

With two men at each oar they began the long pull to leeward to where the *Emerald Reef* was waiting, riding the big seas easily, clear in the light of the moon.

Chuck was too tired to care what became of him now. The pain in his arm was suddenly numbed. He felt he was sinking gently to sleep, rocked by the motion of the boat, lulled by the creaking of oars and the sound of voices, lying on his sound arm, with water slopping over him, next to a man with a bandaged head.

He was conscious of wondering who the man with the bandaged head could be, and then he knew nothing more till hours later, he thought it was hours later, but wasn't sure, he heard cheering, faint cheering in the distance, men yelling, and the mate's voice said:

"Here we are, m' sons, home at last! All of you who are fit enough to climb a pilot ladder had better try. The crocks, any one who's hurt, we'll hoist aboard with the boat!"

## XLII

CAPTAIN GARDINER, swallowing a lump in his throat, feeling nervous, unhappy, walked toward the captain of the *Honda* who stood on the bridge deck, looking forlorn and bewildered.

No matter what his private feelings might be, he knew his duty.

"Captain Pennell," he said in his deep, gruff voice, "I'm glad to see you and your officers and men safe and sound aboard my ship. I thought one time we'd come too late!"

Captain Pennell nodded.

"Captain Gardiner," he said, "I owe my life and the lives of my men and my officers to you and your officers and men. It's a debt I'll never be able to repay. Never!"

He frowned and looked, so Captain Gardiner thought, more forlorn and more miserable than any one else he'd ever seen.

"I want to thank you," he went on. "I want to take back some of the things I said to you when we last met, in the heat of the moment!"

"That's all right," said Captain Gardiner.

And what did regrets matter now? This little leather-faced man had ruined him. Well, what odds. He could smile, still.

He turned and stared at the crowd of men clustered between the galley and the engine-room casing, standing in little groups, talking, watching the *Honda*, and then he saw the steward in his white jacket and called to him.

"Steward, there'll be a drink for all hands, both crews—understand?" He turned once more and pushed open the door of his room. "In you go, Captain Pennell. We'll be sitting down to a meal in a minute or two, but meantime I recommend a hot whisky!"

Captain Pennell squared his shoulders and said:

"Captain Gardiner, you weren't aboard the *Emerald Reef* the other day when your men pelted the *Honda* with clinkers! I ask your pardon!"

"That's all right, Captain Pennell. Let's forget it, for heaven's sake, and talk about something else!"

"No, Captain Gardiner, that's impossible. I ask your pardon for having misjudged you! As for what I said that same day on Market Street, I must have been out of my mind! I've always prided myself on being more or less a man of honor. Well, I'm not! If I had been, I couldn't have said what I did say about that business of poor Harry Evans and that slut of a wife of his! My only excuse is, Captain Gardiner—and it's a pretty poor one at that—I was mad about that orange that was thrown at me! I'd been made to look small and—"

Captain Gardiner interrupted the quick flow of words.

"Wait a bit," he said. "I was sorry about that orange. I want to apologize, too. I was just as angry as you were. Worse. I can't understand it even now! The hands get into some kind of a riot, the officers are dragged into it, and before it's finished you and I who ought to know better are scrapping as bad as any of them!

"But what I've got to tell you is this. I did take that money. I did spend it on a woman. You were perfectly right. Where you were wrong, though, Captain Pennell, was in thinking it was on my own account! It wasn't! Not that that lessens the fault, I know. The woman who had the money was pretty much the same stamp as Harry Evan's wife. She'd got my young brother pretty deep into her clutches. That's why I took the money. He was half out of his mind with fear and drink and talked of killing himself. A pretty bad story, taking it all round, but you'll hear plenty like it, I suppose, if you keep your ears open.

"I didn't know what to do. The woman was threatening exposure unless he paid her to keep quiet. My brother, you see, had just married my wife's young sister and there'd been trouble between them already. I'm not making excuses, just giving you the facts. If Mabel, that was the girl's name, got to know of this other woman, she'd pack up and go. He said, if she did, he'd finish things off at once! He meant it. I thought he did, anyway."

Captain Gardiner winced at the memory of all that had taken place in that incredibly remote period of his life.

"I took the money Harry Evans gave me to give his wife, but I paid it back, every penny, with interest, by slow degrees. That's the solemn truth. I pinched and I starved. I denied myself things I wanted. I got the reputation on board ship of being a miser. I made my poor wife suspect me of spending money I ought to have spent on her on some other woman. She was right in that, of course! I was. I did what I set

out to do. The one possible proof I have, Captain Pennell, that I'm not telling you lies is I've kept the letters in which Mrs. Evans acknowledges she's had the money. They aren't exactly receipts, I know, but they're good enough to show I'm speaking the truth. And that's about all, I think. I thought I'd better tell you!"

Captain Pennell who had listened without saying a word, his face puckered into a frown, turned with a dry laugh.

"And so that's how it was, was it?" he said. "Evans knew that his wife had money paid her by some one, but that's all he could find out! ——! How she spent it, too! A bad lot, that woman! You did no good with your money, Captain Gardiner. Not your fault, naturally! I don't blame you in the least! Any one else in your shoes would have done what you did! But you've made me feel ashamed of myself, I don't mind saying!"

"Suppose we talk of something else," said Captain Gardiner.

"No," said Captain Pennell. "We can't! There's something I've got to tell you, just as important as your telling me about Evans's wife and the money. Not five minutes before your life-boat took me off, I was in my room, putting some odds and ends together. I wanted a thick overcoat. I slipped into the coat I'd been wearing two days ago in San Francisco, and wore it in the boat. This one I've got on! But not until I reached the deck yonder did I put my hand into the pocket."

He broke off and stared at Captain Gardiner with a queer, crumpled look in his face that made it difficult to tell whether he was going to laugh or cry.

"Well?" said Captain Gardiner hoarsely.

Captain Pennell held out to him a letter, the envelope addressed and stamped.

"The letter I wrote and never posted," said Captain Pennell quietly.

"About—about me," said Captain Gardiner.

Captain Pennell nodded.

"Thank God, yes! I wrote it aboard ship and took it ashore with me to post and I would have posted it, too, if I hadn't been so worked up about that orange business I forgot. That's all. Will you take the —— thing and destroy it or shall I?"

"You!" said Captain Gardiner.

He blinked and opened the door and stood on the threshold, breathing deeply.

The men had hoisted the life-boat from the water up to the level of the boat deck.

"Avast heaving!" some one called.

"And that's the end of it, then."

Captain Gardiner sighed. He was free. And Annie would never know! He wondered now how he could have endured the last two days.

A man yelled:

"Look, by ——! Look! She's going!"

In the moonlight the forepart of the *Honda* was visible, standing straight up on end.

For an instant, it seemed, there was no movement. And then, with a rush, the ship dived and vanished.

Captain Pennell uttered a deep sob.

"Poor old girl," he said. "Gone at last!"

He went back into the room.

For a time Captain Gardiner stood staring blindly at the empty sea. Then he climbed the ladder to the chart room to lay off a fresh course for Tahiti.

## XLIII

MR. ROSS, his right arm in a sling still, stepped out of the starboard engine room alley way.

"Whaur's the *Honda's* second engineer?"

"I'm here," said Mr. Malone. He had just been watching the end of the *Honda* and was feeling a little more unhappy than he had ever felt in his life before.

"Wull ye come alang wi' me, Mister! I'm the second engineer here. Ross is ma name."

"Mr. Ross, I've been waiting for a chance to speak to some one about our third. He's still in the life-boat with a cracked head."

"Aye. Is that sae? Hurt aboard the *Honda?*"

Mr. Malone smiled dryly.

"No, Mister. As a matter o' fact, aboard the *Emerald Reef* three nights ago. He was knocked out the time our fellows and yours had that scrap."

"Same as me," said Mr. Ross. "I ha'ena' been able to use ma richt haun' syne!"

Mr. MacLennan who had taken the *Honda's* chief to his own room and seated him on his settee with a glass of whisky forced his way through the crowd.

"Mr. Ross, if that's the *Honda's* third engineer you're talking about, he's to go

into the empty berth here. Tell the mess-room lad, will you! If there aren't enough blankets, let me know!"

The mate spoke from the boat deck above their heads.

"Here, we've got a couple of crocks up here, one of our fellows and one of the *Honda's*! Will some one come up and give us a hand!"

Mr. Malone clambered up the iron ladder and bent over the boat that had been hoisted inboard and was now resting once more on its chocks.

"Up you get, Eddie, m' lad! You're feeling all right, aren't you?"

Mr. Torrance was sitting up, leaning forward, his hands clasped about his knees.

"Feeling all right!" he said. "I suppose I am. Head's splitting. The poor old *Honda's* gone, hasn't she? I wish I'd seen the last of her!"

Mr. Malone helped him out of the boat. He shivered a little and rested his weight on his shoulder.

"I'm tired," he said in a low voice. "I think I could sleep for a year." He smiled faintly when he stood on the bridge-deck, still leaning on Mr. Malone's shoulder, and said, "I wonder if I'll see those pajamas again."

"What's that he's sayin'?" said Mr. Ross.

"Nothing," said Mr. Malone. "He's imagining things!"

When the canvas cover was on the life-boat Mr. Humphreys lowered himself by his arms from the boat deck and dropped.

Watson, the fireman, stood before him.

"Did I dae a' richt?" he said.

"You did," said Mr. Humphreys. "I'm —— proud of you, Watson!"

"Ye're a' richt, tae," said Watson. "A guid lad!"

He patted him on the shoulders and the mate laughed.

"Dan," said the chief, "I ask your pardon, humbly!"

"Whatever for?" said Mr. Humphreys.

"I said things I'd no right to say. You've made me ashamed of myself! I don't think there's any one aboard who could have handled the life-boat a quarter as well as you did and brought back the *Honda's* crew. It was great work, Dan!"

"Stuff, said Mr. Humphreys. "That wasn't anything!"

"Indeed!" said the chief. "Maggie wouldn't say that, anyway!"

Mr. Humphreys laughed but was pleased.

"Chief, you'd better be careful what you say in your next letter home or Maggie'll never believe you! And now, where's the mate of the *Honda*?"

He saw the rather dejected looking thick-set man with the sad eyes and wizened face standing at the rail, staring into the darkness toward where the *Honda* had last been seen.

"Ah! There you are, Mr. Pett! Come along to my room and we'll find you some dry clothes to put on!" He called over his shoulder. "Martin, you'll have to have that arm of yours seen to at once. One of you, Radkin, bring Martin along to the saloon, will you!"

Chuck Martin stood in the center of the group outside the galley.

His arm hurt, hurt like ——; he was a bit sick and dizzy, but he was alive and he was happy. It was fine to be back aboard the ship again, and cheap at the price of a broken arm!

He laughed.

What —— fine fellers they were, all of them! His own crowd, the crowd from the *Honda*! Both crowds!

He saw faces he remembered, men he'd fought with. He found himself shaking hands with his left hand with the man he'd dragged out of the water—Spadger they called him—and listening to what seemed a kind of apology, like.

"You remember who I am, don't you?" he was saying. "Me and you had that scrap in the back room at Webber's on Steuart Street when I lost me wallet. The second engineer found it. If I said anything 'asty, I'm sorry, and I take it back! Y'understand, chum, don't you!"

Chuck didn't understand, but he grinned amiably.

"That's all right, mate. That's nothing. Don't mention it."

He wondered what on earth the feller they called Spadger meant. And then he saw some one else he remembered.

"Biddle," he said. "That's your name, ain't it? How are yer? Me and you had that set-to on the for'ard deck that night. I dunno when I've ever had a better fight in me life."

A red-headed man held out his hand.

"And me!"

"Lor!" said Chuck. "California Street, eh! Well, well, we certainly had some fun

in San Francisco, didn't we?"

"Best fun I ever 'ad in all my born days," said Tank.

"I been wondering ever since how it begun," said Chuck. "Us fellers and you fellers fighting like heathen! Any one know how it begun, eh?"

But nobody knew, so nobody said.

Mr. MacRae, the fourth engineer of the *Honda*, felt himself neglected.

He glanced about him in a frightened, forlorn way. Every one seemed to have somebody to look after him except himself.

He was wet through, shivering with cold, hungry, tired. He could see only sailors and firemen.

He heard some one in the darkness say:

"Where's the *Honda's* fourth engineer? Any one seen the fourth engineer?"

"Aye, here's the fourth engineer," said the *Honda's* donkeyman. "Mr. MacRae, you're wanted!"

The crowd gave way a little.

Mr. MacRae moved in the direction from which had come the voice asking for him and found himself face to face with a thick-set, broad man with his arm in a sling made of a red handkerchief, knotted at the back of his neck. There was something in the man's hard, clean-shaven countenance with its twisted nose and long upper lip and shrewd eyes, that seemed familiar. Somewhere he had seen him before.

They gazed at each other.

"Haven't we met before?" said Mr. MacRae suddenly.

The man had a pipe in his mouth. So had he when they had last met.

Chuck Martin was puzzled.

Had he seen this young feller before now or hadn't he? No, he hadn't! But he had! He was certain. Where, then? He did not know!

He realized that he should say something to show he was friendly! But what? What could he say? He smiled and said the first words that flashed into his mind, words that he felt, in a way, he had wanted to say all along.

"Could you oblige me with a light for me pipe, please, Mister?"

Mr. MacRae put his hand into his pocket.

"If my matches aren't all wet, yes, certainly!"

He struck a match, proud to be of some use to a man who had had his arm broken in saving the lives of other men, and lit his pipe for him.

Chuck Martin puffed at his pipe and asked himself once more where he had seen this white-faced young man before. Fourth engineer of the *Honda*, he was. Hadn't the bosun or some one pointed him out to them? Wrote poetry or something!

Chuck decided he didn't know and he didn't care.

His pipe was lighted.

"Thank you, Mister," he said. "I'm much obliged."

And that, so far as Chuck Martin was concerned, ended it. He had a light for his pipe and he had a broken arm and he wouldn't be able to work for weeks and he was back aboard his own ship, safe and sound, and soon there'd be something to drink!

What more could a man want?

# ALMOST AN EMPEROR

**by R. B. Preston**

THE exploits of "Chinese" Gordon are quite well known, but the adventures of the young American boy who organized the Chinese army before Gordon arrived in China are not. This man, Frederick T. Ward, was born in the old town of Salem, Massachusetts, in 1831 and died at Ningo Po, China, thirty-one years later, after a series of adventures more thrilling than fiction.

The early part of Ward's life is unknown except for the fact that he attended Norwich University, the alma mater of other adventurous men such as Admiral Dewey and General Dodge, who built the Union Pacific Railroad.

Soon after leaving college Ward went to South America and joined the forces of Garibaldi in his vain endeavor to establish the Roman Republic. This filibustering expedition proved highly adventurous but unsuccessful, and at the age of eighteen Ward

returned to the United States a veteran. The next three years were uneventful, but in 1853 he joined the French army and served with distinction in the Crimean War until its close in March, 1856.

Upon his return to America he joined the command of that king of adventurers, William Walker. He saw service in the occupation of Nicaragua and remained with General Walker until the latter's death in Panama.

For a short time Ward engaged as a ship broker in New York City, but finding this life too dull for his impetuous nature, he crossed America on horseback alone, a feat which would have been considered by some daring enough to satisfy any one. When he arrived in San Francisco he shipped as a sailor. In the fall of 1859 he reached Shanghai, China and deserted the ship.

The Taiping rebellion was at its height when Ward reached China and the Taiping rebels were overrunning the country. The Shanghai merchants through Tae Kee, a wealthy banker, offered a reward of $200,000 to any one who would protect the city.

Here was Ward's chance and he took it. He raised a force of one hundred whites, two hundred Filipinos, and two hundred Chinese, and after some reverses defeated a force of 10,000 rebels and captured the walled city of Son Kiang. To accomplish this Ward blew open the wall of the city with gunpowder.

The fight was so severe that out of the five hundred men engaged, only one hundred and twenty-eight survived and only twenty-seven escaped without wounds.

The success of this young New Englander aroused the envy and fear of the English. They declared he was a dangerous freebooter and arrested him on a slight pretext. He was confined in the English admiral's flagship, but his ready wit devised a means of escape.

He disappeared for a time, to return with a force of natives he had organized, armed, and carefully drilled; and who were inspired with his own dare-devil spirit. With this force he cleared the country of the rebels in a radius of thirty miles around Shanghai, and for this service he received large sums of money from the delighted native merchants.

The English and French then recognized his work and took him into their councils. Ward placed his army under iron discipline and led it with consummate skill and daring. His campaigns were among the most bloody of modern times. He met with great success in his battles, winning from the Chinese the name "Ever Victorious."

For his services he was made a mandarin of the highest order and an Admiral-General in the services of the emperor. He married a daughter of an influential Chinaman, became a Chinese citizen and assumed the native dress. He took the native name of Hwa.

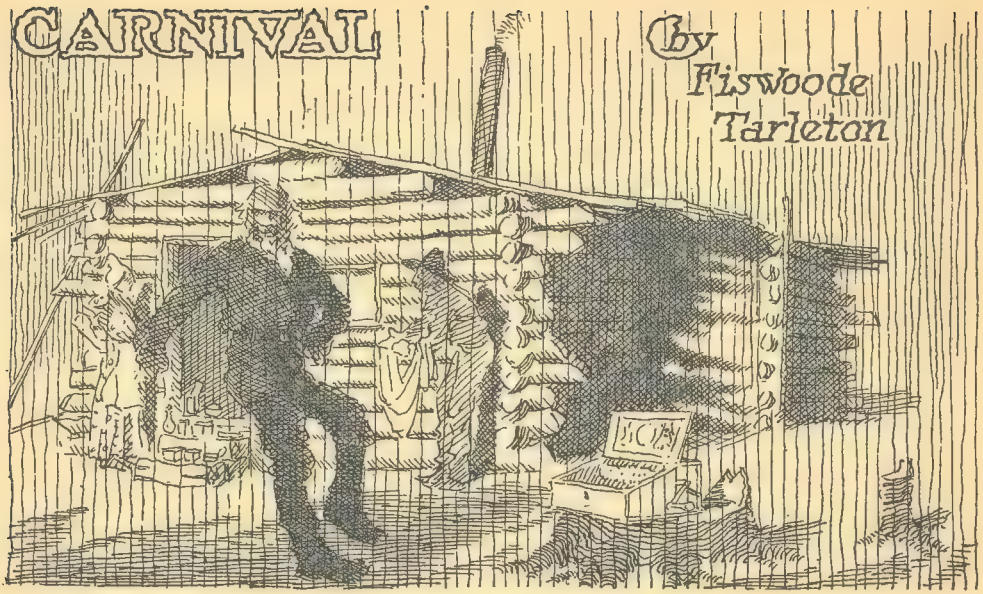
When the Civil War broke out he was anxious to return home and offer his services to President Lincoln, but such was the need of his services in China that he could not leave. He gave ten thousand dollars to United States Minister Burlingham for the cause of the Union. Soon after the Trent affair, when England threatened to declare war on the United States, General Ward made plans to seize every English ship and sailor in Chinese waters.

Ward's successes made him ambitious for greater power. He planned to capture the stronghold of Nankin and overthrow the Tatar dynasty and become emperor of China. Fighting for the emperor took up his time, however, and at the battle of Tae Ki on October 22, 1862, he was severely wounded, but refused to leave the field until the battle was won. He died the next day from his wounds. The Chinese held him in high regard and buried him in the Confucian cemetery at Sang Keang, where the priests today burn incense before his tomb. The government has erected several monuments to the memory of this American soldier of fortune.

He was succeeded in command by Major Charles G. Gordon, who later became famous as "Chinese" Gordon.

# CARNIVAL

By Fiswoode Tarleton



*Author of "Corn," "Color," etc.*

UNCLE JEFF NODSEY was singing to himself on the Leeston road, where the road began to rise and twist around Night Cap Mountain. The sun was sinking behind the mountain and the magnolia tree shadows were creeping upon the road. Nodsey's words were jumbled and his voice flew out of key. He beat the road with his hickory stick and struck at the laurel scrub at the roadside.

"Ho-ho, childers, she squeaks! The meesheeny rattles!"

Bobolinks and warblers were singing, too, from the tree tops. A bobolink's trailing note came from the tree top over Nodsey's head. Dripping notes fell like crystals about the mountain side.

Nodsey cocked his ears and peered above. He shook his stick at a crow that flew overhead. The crow's shrill caw silenced the bobolink, and Nodsey lashed the scrub again, frowning at the black patch lumbering against the sky.

At the breach in the scrub, where the path began that led down the slope from the road to the valley, Nodsey stopped again and listened. Faint "ho-ho" lifted up to his ears, echoing from the valley crags below. He struck the ground again as he started down the path. The path was stony and steep and he clutched at the brush, starting loose stones rolling down ahead of him.

When Nodsey came to Pulpit Rock he walked across the smooth surface to the edge overlooking the crags and the creek that sent up tinkling notes to him from the little ravine. The wash of the water entered his blood.

"Ho-ho!" came from the valley again; woman's "ho-ho," shrill in Nodsey's ears. Echoes bounced from the crags and the ravine and he shut his ears with his hands until the echoes died.

"Yore meesheeny rattles, ole woman."

He looked up at the sky, and at the summit of Night Cap Mountain, and stepped across Pulpit Rock to another breach in the scrub, where the path continued on to the valley below. The drop in the path was sharp, and he made nests for his feet before he stepped. He clung to the brush. Till the path, turning to escape a tangle of thorny undergrowth, came to a sudden halt. There was a movement in the brush somewhere. The brush was cracking, and he peered around.

"Injuns! Ho-ho!"

He shrank away from the yellow head coming out of the brush. He plunged into the dense growth on the opposite side of the path as a boy sprang at him—freckled-face boy, barefoot boy chasing

Nodsey from tree to tree and laughing. Nodsey made frightened faces from behind the trees; he forced fright into his eyes and trembles into his legs when the boy grabbed him by the galluses and pulled him to the ground.

"Injuns a-skelpin' tha ole man. Ho-ho! Hellup, childers."

The boy was grabbing Nodsey's hair now and running a stick around his scalp. He was dancing around Nodsey and letting out whoops. The whoops were thrown back by the crags, tossed back and forth by the crags and the boy.

Nodsey forced more horror into his eyes and made his hands shake as he raised them for mercy.

"Skelped, childers. Injuns a-skelpin' Uncle Jeff."

The whoops stopped, and laughter rang on the slope. Clear peals of laughter struck the crags above and bounded back to Nodsey's ears, borne through him by his blood, echoing inside him. Clear peals filled and covered him, and he lay still while the boy pummeled him.

Panting, the boy threw himself on Nodsey's body.

"Ho-ho!" came from the valley below.

"Ole woman squeaks." The boy spoke between breaths.

"She squeaks." Nodsey put his hands to his ears.

"Ho-ho."

The shrill call found a place between Nodsey's fingers and jerked him to his feet, rasped in his blood, started him striking the brush again with his hickory stick.

"Ho-ho."

The call was a shriek now and it pierced him; the echo of it moved Nodsey through the scrub back to the path.

"She squeaks," Nodsey called over the top of the scrub.

"Ole woman squeaks!" The boy's rippling laughter followed Nodsey as he started down the path again.

Stones loosened by Nodsey's feet rolled ahead of him.

When the path straightened and the drop to the creek became steeper, the stones bounded down to the waters. When Nodsey reached the creek he saw his woman standing on the other side, above him, where a log reached over the water. She was beckoning to him, her arms were making arcs in the air. He stepped faster down the water-side to the log. She frowned at him as he crossed it, her hands sought her hips as he stood before her on the other side.

"Whar yuh been, ole man?"

"Been a-huntin' oak wood."

"I reckon yuh been a-huntin' oak wood. Yuh been a-playin' ag'in. Huh. Yuh been a-foolin' ag'in with tha O'Gowd boy. I heerd yuh. Them Kent men a-drivin' hyar from Leeston fer wood and yuh hain't cut nary a stick. Yuh hain't even got yore ax. Huh. Yuh reckon a-playin' Injun with childers 'er a-goin' tuh bring in vittels? Lordsey! yo're tha mos' shif'less man in tha hills. Ef yuh don' look perter I'll leave yore ole tumble-down shack."

NODSEY moved the stones around on the creek-bank with the end of his stick while his woman talked on. Her voice rose to screeches sometimes, making him wince and bringing ants to his back. The crags returned her screeches.

When the last echo of her words died up the hillsides, she opened a fist and showed him a heart-shaped bottle of perfume. Nodsey started to take the bottle from her hand but she drew back. She took the cork out of the bottle and held it under his nose. She rubbed his nose with the cork and her own and put the cork back.

"Whar'd yuh git hit?"

"Peddler-man. He's a-waitin' at tha shack."

"Ho-ho! Peddler-man."

Nodsey started through the trees, his woman following. When he came out of the woods before his cabin the peddler was sitting on the ground by the stoop. A small, wizened, brown man; brown like the logs of the cabin his body was leaning against. His wares were laid out on the stoop and reached into the cabin. Bolts of cloth rested against the door jamb. Galluses and jean-pants were thrown over the bolts.

Nodsey and his woman squatted on the ground near the peddler and bent over the wares on the stoop. The peddler held cakes of soap under her nose and he stretched galluses for Nodsey, blue and pink ones. He snapped the galluses and handed them to Nodsey.

"Good," he said.

Nodsey's woman picked up the cakes of

soap from the stoop and smelled them all again.

Opening up a box, the peddler took more soap from it, soap in wrappers, and these he passed under her nose.

"Nice," he said, and handed them to her.

Smelling each cake several times, her nostrils quivered. Closing her hand over one cake, she put the rest back on the stoop. While Nodsey fingered the small wares she handed the peddler a ten cent piece and slid the soap into her bosom.

The peddler showed them lace and jewelry but the woman was smelling soap again and Nodsey's eyes were fastened on a mouth harp. He picked it up and blew on it. The notes he blew were thick and out of tune and he handed the mouth harp to the peddler. Wiping it on his sleeve the peddler put it to his mouth and covered it with his hands. Gay tunes came out between his fingers, and the peddler's eyes danced. Nodsey's feet beat time on the ground and he swung his head. When his woman passed a cake of soap under his nose he pushed her hand away.

While the peddler played on the mouth harp and Nodsey beat time and the woman smelled the things on the stoop the shadows grew dark under the trees and the fog from the creek bottom spread to the cabin. The path to the creek blackened, and black pockets formed behind the scrub beyond the cabin.

The peddler ran the scales of the mouth harp the last time, wiped it, and handed it to Nodsey. Nodsey blew some more thick notes and stamped hard on the earth with his feet.

"She squeaks."

Holding his finger up before Nodsey, the peddler unwrapped a box from a piece of red cloth. There were pictures of angels on the cover of the box, gold angels that shone. The peddler turned a handle on the box several times. Tinkling music came from the box, gay music that danced in Nodsey's blood.

"Polka," the peddler said.

"Ho-ho! childers. Hit's a polka."

Nodsey leaned over close to the music box, his finger tracing out the angels on the cover. He wound the music box up again when the polka died down.

The peddler's wares were growing dim on the stoop. Only the metal combs, the buckles on the galluses and garters, the jewelry and the gold angels on the cover of the music box caught the last traces of light coming from overhead. The peddler looked up at the sky, then he rose to his feet and stepped over the things on the stoop into the cabin. He felt around on the floor for his telescope-pack and began putting his things in it; the bolts of cloth first, then the jean-pants and the galluses.

Nodsey's woman rose and stepped over the things on the stoop. She lighted the fat-pine light in the cabin. The smoke from it hung in the still air. The shadow of the peddler picking up his small things moved on the ground beyond the stoop, and Nodsey's arms threw shadows as they swung in time to the polka.

When nothing was left on the stoop but the music box, the peddler moved over closer to Nodsey. His finger traced the outline of the gold angels and he gave the box a pat with his hand.

"Nice."

The music box ran down, and Nodsey wound it up again.

"Cheap!" The peddler held up two fingers before Nodsey.

Nodsey's woman reached over them and took the music box. She wrapped it in its cloth and handed it to the peddler who nested it in his pack. He shrugged his shoulders.

"Yuh crazy, ole man?"

She gave a sharp look at Nodsey and sat down on the cot-bed near the door.

The tinkles came faintly from the peddler's pack as he swung it on to his back and stepped down off the stoop. The peddler shaded his eyes with one hand and looked around the clearing for the path. Nodsey rose and led him to it, going ahead of the peddler, through the trees. The music box still tinkled in the peddler's pack. The blackness closed in on them.

"Ho-ho, ole man." The voice of Nodsey's woman brought them to a stop.

"Ho-ho." Nodsey called back.

"Better go along past the scrags."

The peddler clutched Nodsey's sleeve.

"She say?"

"Ole woman squeaks. Her meesheeny rattles. Come on, childers."

The tinkles coming from the peddler's pack had stopped.

"Ole woman's squeaks kilt tha polka, ho-ho!"

WHEN they came out from under the trees and Nodsey found the log that reached across the creek, he placed the peddler's foot on it and he let him hang to his galluses as they walked across the log. A bullfrog's banjo note came from a distant swamp and an owl screeched from atop the hill.

On the other side of the creek the peddler clung to Nodsey's galluses until they found the breach in the scrub, where the path began that led up the slope, past the crags to the Leeston road. The stones on the path crunched under the peddler's feet, the steady stretching of the straps of the peddler's pack sounded in between his breathings.

Nodsey's puffs answered the peddler's now. The path grew steeper.

Groaning from the lift, the peddler's pack shook out a single tinkle. Nodsey stopped. The peddler bumped into him.

They both set down to get their wind, puffing in each other's face. When they got their wind, Nodsey wanted to hear the polka again. The peddler didn't move, though. Nodsey felt for the pack and gave it a tug.

The peddler moved farther away from Nodsey. Beyond reach. He wouldn't unpack.

While the peddler was rising to his feet and the straps of his pack were creaking, Nodsey worked his way back on his elbows through the scrub and lay still. Blackberry thorns pricked his back and his neck, but he didn't move. The peddler was feeling around for him on the black path. Nodsey could hear the peddler's hands scraping over the rocky surface of the path and the brush of his body against the scrub.

"Meester!"

The call was right in front of Nodsey but he didn't move. Blackberry thorns were entering his flesh.

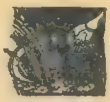
The peddler was muttering and stumbling now, and his pack groaned and creaked, throwing out a tinkle to Nodsey's ears.

"Meester!" Louder, the call was tossed back by the crags above, and when it was lost on the hillside, the stones began bounding down the path past Nodsey again.

Jumbled words came from the peddler as he stumbled up the path toward the crags. Another tinkle came.

After a while the stones stopped coming down the path. The mutterings stopped and the peddler's feet stopped their stumbling. Nodsey strained his ears. Pretty soon they heard the scrape of the peddler's foot on the flat surface of Pulpit Rock; another scrape came, and another. Nodsey counted them on his fingers. He went over the fingers of both hands twice, gripping the tips of his fingers, holding on to each one tight until another scrape came.

Nodsey was holding the little finger of his left hand for the third time. Twenty-five steps had sounded from Pulpit Rock—too many. By now the peddler ought to have stepped off Pulpit Rock, on to the black air over the gorge.



ANOTHER scrape, and Nodsey grabbed the thumb of his right hand and clung to it, holding his breath as a scream bounded back from the crags. A *thud* that didn't echo loosened Nodsey's hold on his thumb.

The blackberry thorns let loose of his flesh. He crawled through the scrub to the path and listened. Silence till a screech-owl atop the hill broke it. He began to climb the path. His feet made nests for themselves on the path before they took his weight; between steps he listened. He caught himself humming, humming the polka and clapped his hand to his mouth.

He was long in reaching Pulpit Rock. Making nests for his feet took time. Listening between each step held him back.

At last, when he felt the rock with his foot he got down on his hands and knees and crawled forward, his hands feeling ahead one by one.

The rush of a night bird's wings as it flew over his head stopped him for a minute. Then he began crawling again. After a while his hand went over the edge of Pulpit Rock. He got down on his belly and pulled himself forward until his head hung over.

Nodsey could hear the creek washing over the rocks below him. Suddenly tinkles lifted up to him. The polka was playing in the gorge. He cleaned his ears with his fingers. The tinkling notes still came. The gay tune danced in his blood and his head swung over the edge of the rock in time with it.

The tinkles stopped coming after a while. He lowered a leg over the edge and felt around with his foot for the narrow shelf of ledge below, the first of the rocky steps leading down to the gorge. His foot was on

the ledge when he saw a light across the gorge, moving down the wooded slope of Nightcap. The light was sinking lower and lower on the mountain side. When the light came out of the woods at the foot of the mountain it moved up the gorge along the bank of the creek, toward the crags, toward him. A figure was pushing the light and another figure was following. The O'Gowd men from Nightcap.

Voices came pretty soon. The O'Gowd men's eyes were big and shone behind the light. They were peering ahead and stepping slowly, holding the light low, their shadows, long and narrow, trailing after them. The flaming wick in the spout of the teapot was like a tongue, the draft through the gorge made it dart ahead of the O'Gowds and its likeness moved in the waters of the creek.

Nodsey drew his head back over the edge of Pulpit until only his eyes and crown hung over. The O'Gowds stopped suddenly. The teapot torch splashed a form lying prone on the bank of the creek. The peddler's arms were stretched out ahead of him, his hands almost reached the music box on the sloping bank. The peddler's feet were in the water. The creek in its rush leaped over his legs.

Gabe O'Gowd, who carried the light, moved up closer and held it over the peddler's pack, dumped of its wares. Galluses, bolts of cloth and handkerchiefs were strewn about. Tobacco-pipes and metal combs, mouth harps and soap dotted the creek bank.

Nodsey watched Gabe and Rudd O'Gowd scratch their heads, and he strained his ears over Pulpit to get their words.

"Reckon he couldn't yell fer help." Gabe said it and held the light over the music box.

Rudd bent over and traced out the angels on the cover of the box with his finger.

"Huh. A-callin' folks with that thar tune afore he kicked in. Po' man."

"Folks hain't keerful enough a-steppin' roun' these hills blacky nights. Strange folks hain't. Lordsey! I wouldn't step around the crags ef hit's blacky, good as I know 'em."

Rudd Gowd picked up a tobacco-pipe and started to suck on it. Gabe took it from him and returned it to the ground.

"Hit's best not tuh touch nothin'."

"What we a-goin tuh do? Fotch tha constable?"

"Constable! Huh. Shows what yuh know 'bout hit. Peddler tumbled off Pulpit by hisself. Got tuh git tha car'ner. Yuh kin ride the mule tuh Leeston. Better hustle."

Gabe O'Gowd sat down on the ground and laid down the teapot torch. His shadow covered the body back of him but the arms of the peddler were stretched out beyond the O'Gowd man's shadow. The thin shadows cast by the peddler's arms moved with the darting flame of the torch and the shadows of his hands lengthened and shortened. A strong draft struck the yellow tongue of flame; it was pointed toward the water. The shadows of the peddler's hands stretched, touching the music box.

Rudd O'Gowd took a hitch on his jeanpants and stepped away from his brother. He looked behind him and half turned.

"Yuh a-goin' tuh stop hyar?"

"Shore I'm goin tuh stop hyar. I haint scairt 'o dead-uns."

"I hain't afeared, either."

"O'course yuh hain't. I hain't said so. But tha mule'll step smarter fer yuh then fer me."

"Huh."

Rudd O'Gowd shambled off, his shadow moving ahead of him. When he was lost in the blackness under the timber of the mountain side, Gabe O'Gowd drew nearer the dead peddler's wares. He threw glances behind and above him.

Nodsey drew his head back over Pulpit, waited a while, and pushed his eyes over the edge again. Gabe O'Gowd was picking up the peddler's wares and looking at them. He was stretching the galluses and trying combs in his hair. He smelled of the cakes of soap and picked up a pair of blue galluses. As he threw them over his shoulder flashes of light darted from the buckles.

The flaming wick in the teapot spout was lifting higher. The draft through the gorge was stronger and made the flame splutter. Shadows were shifting more. The shadows of the peddler's sprawling arms grew longer and their tips touched the music box. The elbow of Gabe O'Gowd struck the music box. Tinkles rode the lifting air to Nodsey's ears. The tinkles were cold in his ears and, entering his blood, made his body jump. His boot toes scraped the rock. Faint

scrapes, but Gabe O'Gowd shot glances upward and Nodsey drew in his head.

On his hands and knees, Nodsey backed over Pulpit Rock to the path and standing up listened. Then he began his descent, making nests for his feet and clutching the scrub bordering the path.

The tongue of yellow light was still before his eyes. He couldn't rub it away with his fingers or close his eyes against it. The yellow tongue was behind him when he looked back and it was on either side of the path when he turned his head. The tongue of light traveled ahead of him all the way down the hillside and it crossed the creek with him, to the timber and through the timber to the clearing in front of his cabin. The light from the fat-pine coming through the cabin door drove the tongue away.

HIS woman was snoring in an even steady bass, and he crept into the cabin under her snores. With his eyes on her he got out of his pants and shoes and crawled into bed. The fat-pine was filling the cabin with smoke but it kept away that hovering yellow tongue, and he let it burn. Shadows were shifting in the cabin and outside. The ax handle lying across the chopping block by the door reached out a long restless shadow.

The shocks in the bed rustled as his woman moved. She coughed from the smoke and rose up.

"Yuh crazy. Yuh a-tryin' tuh choke me tuh death. Put hit out."

His legs were cold against the night. When he got back into bed after making the cabin dark the shock mattress rustled with his shaking. He heard his woman sniffing her soap several times before she dropped off to sleep. Pretty soon her snores came again steady and thick. The banjo note of a bullfrog came from the hollow, bullfrog answering his woman's thick snores with his single note, plunks and grunts mocking each other across the night.

He had put out the fat-pine light, but it was still before his eyes, leaping swifter than his eyes could shift. Wherever he threw his eyes about the black cabin the light was there first, waiting for them. It was growing into a yellow tongue now. He began to count squirrels running up a tree to put himself asleep, going over a finger for every squirrel, running over all of his fingers again and again.

The tree was in a forest when he began to count, but pretty soon the forest drew away, leaving the tree alone in a gorge by a creek. Shadows were on the bank of the creek, reaching, narrow shadows touching the tree, reaching up the tree and pulling down the squirrels he was trying to count.

"Stop yore yellin'." His woman shook him roughly, and dropped off to sleep again.

Her snores, thick and steady, passed over him. He lay under her snores, afraid to count things, waiting for the sun.

The pall of the cabin faded to gray at last, a gray between light and shadow where he lost himself in sleep. When he was jerked back to things by his woman the sun was rising above the valley; shining on the stub in front of the cabin, filtering through the trees.

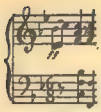
"Hustle tha water."

Nodsey got into his shoes and jean-pants and, taking the bucket from the corner of the cabin, made his way to the creek. He stood on the log crossing the creek, dipped the bucket under the water and listened to the waters of the creek washing over the rocks, trickling around them.

Tinkles entered his ears. The sun danced in the water and the water tinkled. He jerked the bucket from the creek, half spilling it as he stepped back over the log to the bank. At the edge of the trees he stopped. The O'Gowd men were crossing the creek below, stepping from rock to rock. Rudd O'Gowd carried a rifle in the crook of his arm; he was rubbing a tobacco pipe on his sleeve, pausing on each stone to polish his pipe. Gabe O'Gowd had his thumbs under his blue galluses. When they stepped out on the bank of the creek Rudd filled his pipe and Gabe ran a comb through his hair.

After the O'Gowds had disappeared into the timber, Nodsey returned to his cabin with the water and put it inside the door.

"Hustle tha wood."

He heard his woman sniffing as he chopped. A bobolink began dropping notes from a near-by laurel tree; tinkling, gay notes that rained among the trees. They were cold in Nodsey's ears, and he threw a chip of wood up at the bobolink, chasing him away. But tinkles were still coming, faint tinkles from across the creek, from the slope dropping away from the Leeston road.

THE polka was playing on the hillside and the sun was stepping over the tree tops, dancing on the leaves.

"Hustle."

Nodsey swung his ax again. The music stopped coming between the blows of the ax. Only sniffs from the cabin came and the drags of his woman's feet on the earthen floor.

Barefoot and wearing a long calico shirt, the O'Gowd boy stood suddenly in the mouth of the path abutting the Nodsey cabin. The music box was in his hands and his face was cut by a grin. He began creeping up behind Nodsey, creeping and grinning without sound. When he was close to him he took his finger out from under the cover of the box, releasing the polka. The flood of tinkles swept the clearing and the woods around the clearing. Nodsey fell before it as from a wave, leaving the ax embedded in the log. He was backing away from the O'Gowd boy toward the fringe of scrub, striking out with his arms as if at bees.

The boy saw the horror in Nodsey's eyes and that his face was pale under his beard. The boy's laughter rang out, above the tinkles; his peals of laughter were thrown back weakly by the crags and they jerked Nodsey's woman to the doorway of the cabin.

"Honey, don' go a-foolin with yore Uncle Jeff till he gits his chores done. Ole man, stop yore playin' an' hustle the firewood.

The boy choked his laughter.

"I hain't a-playin' yo're scairt, Uncle Jeff. I fotched yuh a present from my pap."

Nodsey was backing into the scrub, his hands were pushing out toward the O'Gowd boy, and pants were coming from his mouth.

"Stop that thar crazy box, honey. Ole man, git busy."

The boy ran his finger under the cover and held the music. But Nodsey still retreated. Now he was beyond the scrub and running between the trees. His arms were still striking out.

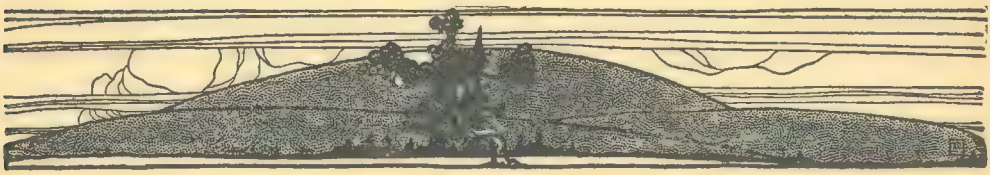
"Box hain't a-goin' now, Aunt Attie."

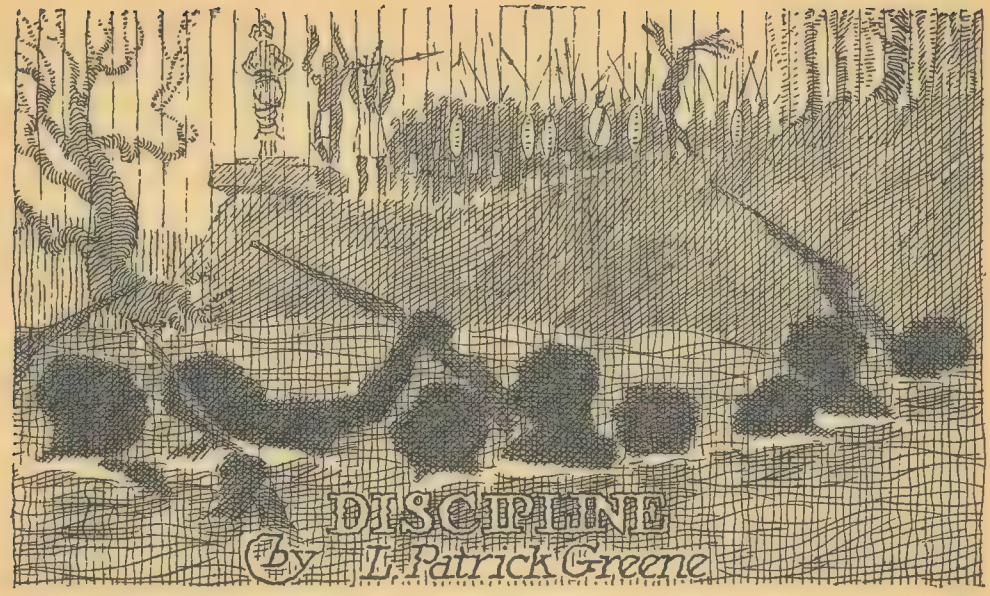
"Allus a-wantin' tuh play. Shif'less, 'onery ole man. Go an' fotch him back, honey. I'm a-waitin' fer firewood."

The O'Gowd boy sprang through the scrub and followed the windings between the trees taken by Nodsey. Calling—

"I hain't a-playin' yo're scairt. I fotched yuh a present from my pap. I hain't a-playin' yo're scairt."

From the stoop Nodsey's woman heard the boy's calls grow fainter in the forest. She took the stopper from the heart-shaped perfume bottle in her hand and passed it under her nose. She watched the ax lose its bite in the log, topple, nose its sharp edge into the stub and settle.






*Author of "The Impertinence of M'Hoy," "Fly," etc.*

SIMMONS awoke from a heavy sleep, conscious that something was wrong. He opened his eyes and looked about the hut. The gray light of early morning filtered through the open door and the holes in the thatched roof like swirling fog vapor. Outside the hut sounded the whispering *patter-patter* of naked feet and a man's voice calling in a high-pitched, nasal tone—

"'Tention!"

Simmons grinned at his momentary qualm of uneasiness and with a characteristic gesture ran his fingers through his crisp, curly red hair. Everything was as it should be; there was nothing to justify his awakening doubts. Of course the hut was in a disgraceful, dilapidated condition; the rough, native-made furniture was dust-covered and ant-eaten; the fabric of the age-yellowed mosquito netting, twisted and tied as prescribed in the regulations, it hung above the bed like a monstrous, unclean cocoon—was rotten and served only as a haven for fat red spiders and small green-and-gold lizards.

Simmons sighed. After all, a trooper of the British South African Police on border guard at a very remote post on the Rhodesian frontier had no right to expect luxuries. Still, there were several things he could do to make his lot more comfortable. The roof, for instance, could be newly thatched; the door—it swung creakingly on broken hinges—could be mended; the bed—

He thumped the ramshackle contrivance and cursed in disgust at the clouds of choking dust which filled the air. What a lazy, filthy sweep Benson must have been! And then he silently apologized to the man he had relieved. Benson was now in hospital with blackwater fever and all this dust could have collected in the two weeks that had elapsed between Benson's departure and his own arrival at the post—late last night.

Outside the Black Watch was drilling, and he grinned again at the parrot-like flow of curses, broken English mingling with the picturesque slang of the vernacular which accompanied the corporal's commands; the man had never been taught his English in a mission school, that was sure!

Simmons sat upright.

The gray shafts of light were changing to golden. The sun had risen. In an hour or less it would be too hot for comfort.

"Boy!" he shouted.

Outside there sounded a murmur of voices. But no one came.

"Boy!" Simmons shouted again and sprang out of bed.

A native came to the doorway of the hut.

His eyes were bleared with sleep, the shirt he wore was indescribably filthy and he shivered violently—as one will on coming out into the clean cold of early morning after a night spent in a foggy hut, lying close to a smoky fire, covered by a pile of heavy, vermin-ridden blankets.

"You wanted?" he questioned, eyeing the white man sullenly.

"Coffee, hot water for shaving and fill that thing with cold." He pointed to a battered tin bath hanging on the wall.

The native looked at him wonderingly.

"Quick!" Simmons snapped.

The native slowly withdrew.

The murmur of voices sounded and then, following a brief period of silence, the parrot-like cursing of the Black Watch corporal began again.

Simmons danced about the hut—he was surprizingly light for so big a man—shadow-boxing, doing setting-up exercises, working himself into a gentle perspiration.

He stopped when the native returned with a tin cup full of some lukewarm concoction which looked like dishwater and smelt vaguely of coffee, and another cup full of hot water.

"That—" he indicated the bath tub with a jerk of his head—"will not hold water. It is full of holes. It—"

He had not taken his eyes off Simmons who was meditatively sipping the coffee but, nevertheless, he did not dodge quick enough to miss the cup of slop which the white man, with a sudden jerk of his wrist, sent full in his face.

"Do not bring me filth like that again," Simmons said tersely. "Now get me cold water. Quick!"

The native fled and Simmons, whistling softly, a half angry, half puzzled look in his gray eyes, shaved.

The native returned with a leaky pail of water, set it quietly just inside the door and hastily departed, just as the white man was rounding his well shaped chin for the second time.

Simmons sluiced himself thoroughly and then rubbed himself with a thick coarse towel which made his skin glow with the pink of health.

Several times his eyes wandered toward the door. He was anxious to see the drill of the Black Watch. But he forced himself to wait until he could present himself to them fully clad. Simmons had his own ideas of the duty of a white man in South Africa, and he rigidly adhered to them. He believed, rightly or wrongly, that the white race was a superior creation and that it was a white man's duty to see that he did nothing that might possibly degrade him in the eyes of the natives.

So he dressed himself carefully—putting on his khaki putties with an exactness that would have brought joy to the eyes of "Jimmy," that martinet of a R. S. M. at headquarters.

"I wonder—" he mused as he polished the brass buttons of his tunic, and the yipping orders of the native corporal punctuated his wonderings.

When he was fully dressed he went to the door of his hut and stood there, unseen, watching the drill of the native police.

And he no longer wondered. Here was an explanation of the thing that had puzzled him, that had registered on his subconscious, creating a feeling of doubt, a fear that something was wrong.

At first laughter filled his eyes, but mirth presently gave way to anger—a cold, reasoning anger.

The privates of the Black Watch were standing in a ragged row facing the hut and their corporal. He sat on an upturned bucket in the shade near-by.

Some of the men wore their full uniform—khaki shorts, blue jumper and red, black-tasseled fez—others were dressed in the bedraggled cast-offs of some white man. Two were naked save for a loin-cloth and all were dirty, shiftless-looking. The corporal was no better than the men! He wore a tattered, grease-smeared blanket draped over his shoulders. He was smoking, luxuriously blowing out clouds of smoke between shouted orders and a string of curses.

AT EACH order the men clumsily performed some intricate movement with their rifles, or turned confusedly to the right or left, or, worse yet, did nothing but stand still and grin.

"P'rade! 'Tention!" shouted the corporal and, knocking the dead ashes from his pipe rose, stretching himself lazily.

The men came to some semblance of order and with eagerness awaited the next command.

It came presently—after the corporal had refilled his pipe.

"Shol'er arms!"

Simmons nodded approval of their execution of the order. Apparently they could drill if they wanted to.

The corporal lighted a match, held it above the bowl of his pipe, puffing noisily.

"P'rade—di'miss!"

The men turned smartly to the right but before they could fall out another command came crisply and the voice which gave it commanded obedience.

"P'rade! As you were!"

They faced front again, grinning uneasily as Simmons walked out into the sunlight and looked at them contemptuously.

"The drill is over, sar!" the corporal said. "It is time for the men to eat."

Simmons turned toward him, and with panic-stricken haste the corporal took the pipe from his mouth and thrust it in his loin-cloth, squirming a little as the heat of the bowl burned the tender flesh of his belly.

Simmons nodded thoughtfully.

"What is your name?" he asked in the vernacular.

The corporal started.

"M'Bosa, sar," he answered and wished that the white man would not stare so fixedly at him.

"You drill the men every morning?"

"Yes, sar. Ever since we came to this post six moons ago. The other white man —he who is now sick—he did not like to get up in the morning; he did not come from his hut until the drill was over. He—"

The corporal stopped. How the white man stared!—and turning away in confusion looked wrathfully at the men who grinned in delight at his discomfiture.

"Shall I tell the men to fall out, sar?" he asked humbly. "It is the time for their skoff. They are hungry. They—" his voice trailed away into silence.

"No!" Simmons said curtly. "Go you and fall in at the end of the line. Presently I will talk to you all."

M'Bosa looked as if he were about to make some heated protest but the white man contemptuously turned his back on him and, after a moment's hesitation, the corporal shuffled dejectedly to the end of the line, muttering curses under his breath.

"Boy!" Simmons called.

The native who had brought him the coffee and shaving water came running.

"Yes, sar?"

"Your name?"

"Sixpence, sar."

Simmons looked at his watch.

"In one hour, Sixpence, I shall come to the cook hut. If I see any dirt, a *sjambok-ing* will follow. In two hours I shall go to the skoff hut and if I see any dirt there, or if the food is ill-served, or if you are not clean, another sjamboking will as surely follow. That is all. You may go."

With a guilty knowledge of rust-and-grease-mired pans, of a cook-hut which was anything but clean, of a table in the skoff hut covered with candle grease and other filth, Sixpence darted away, his face working convulsively as if he already felt the cutting caress of a *sjambok*.

Simmons advanced slowly and coming to a halt a few paces before the Black Watch, pointed the middle finger of his right hand in scorn at them.

"Pigs!" he ejaculated. "Pigs!" he said again, very slowly, as his finger traveled down the line.

The men stiffened perceptibly.

"You do not like to be called pigs, eh?" Simmons said with a harsh laugh. "Then you must have pride and you are not altogether lost to shame. And yet—" the men squirmed under the lashing sarcasm of his voice— "I praised you highly when I called you pigs. I should have called you *buloyi;* I should have pointed my first finger at you. But, see how merciful I am, I only call you pigs."

A cloud of dust arose from their embarrassed scuffling.

"You are liars, all of you," Simmons continued in an even, unimpassioned voice. "By your mouths you proclaim yourselves to be men and warriors of the great white chief, but by the filthiness in which you live it is plain that you are no men. No. Not men, but brothers to the dog-apes. Tchat! I spit your filth from me! I weep for you."

He turned his head on one side.

"*Au-a, baba!*" one of the men muttered. "I, Guffa, speak. And I say that we are shamed."

Simmons turned quickly toward him.

"Aye, you are shamed indeed, Guffa. But I did not shame you. I say that you brought this shame upon yourselves. And yet it may be that I am dealing unjustly with you; it may be that you are only a few herd boys playing at being warriors."

"We are warriors, *inkosi*," Guffa answered.

Simmons shook his head.

"How can that be? How can you be warriors? Know you not that warriors obey without question the orders of those set over them? Know you not that the man, M'Bosa, because of the authority given to him, is the voice—a small voice, it is true—of the great white chief. Yet, when he ordered thus and so, you laughed in mockery."

"When a puny fool gives orders, *inkosi*, what can men do but laugh?" another man said.

"He can obey," Simmons answered sharply, "when that puny fool is the mouthpiece of a great one. Answer me this: In the days gone by, did you laugh at the orders beaten out on the signal drum at the kraal of the chief? No. You obeyed without question. Yet there was not one among you who could not—had he been so minded—have said the order came only from a drum, a lifeless thing—a thing empty of everything except noise."

"True, *inkosi*," a tall, gangling native answered, "but this drum of ours is a cracked thing; its voice whispers."

"You could hear it if your ears were open. Truly you are like dog-apes. You pull each other's tails. You—"

"*Au-a, baba!* We are shamed enough," interjected Guffa. "Our teeth have become soft through eating too much pap. Give us a bone to chew."

Simmons nodded and stepping back a pace shouted—

"Order—arms!"

Because of their great eagerness the order was clumsily executed. The corporal, M'Bosa, dropped his rifle, picked it up and almost dropped it again in his nerveless haste. He looked down the line at his comrades, grinning sheepishly. But their faces were set stern, they stared fixedly before them.

"For inspection—"

They moved rapidly, anticipating the order.

"As you were," Simmons snapped. "Don't move until you get the order and when you do, move like——!"

Except for the order and the curse they did not understand what he was saying, but there was some quality in his voice, something electrical, which held them and they leaned forward slightly from the waist—like men breasting a strong current—waiting for his next order. Their faces set in grim determination.

"For inspection—port arms!"

Their keen desire to please was admirable; their performance ludicrous.

SIMMONS bit his under lip, took off his helmet and ran his fingers through his hair. Then, replacing the helmet, he walked slowly down the line, examining the rifles. They were all dirty—except Guffa's, and his was not overclean. M'Bosa's was the dirtiest.

"Fall out!" Simmons said curtly to the corporal and, when the man obeyed, added, "Go and help Sixpence clean up."

"Sar," M'Bosa expostulated, "I am a soldier. I am a corporal of the Black Watch. I am no house boy."

"I know no more of you than what you yourself have shown me," Simmons said tersely. "You call yourself a corporal of the Black Watch, but you dress like a *shenzi*. *Au-a!* You are dirtier than any wild man. Go quickly now before I think of a greater shame to put upon you.

M'Bosa departed quickly at that.

"Guffa!"

"Yah, *inkosi?*"

"Why, seeing that you too look like a *shenzi*, is your rifle clean?"

"I used to be a hunter, *inkosi*, and nothing mattered as long as I kept my spears sharp and bright, my snares in good condition."

Simmons nodded understandingly.

"And have you a voice these others can hear? Can you make them obey your voice?"

Guffa stiffened. There was no fat on him; the muscles of his arm rippled smoothly as he thumped his magnificent chest with a clenched fist.

"I am no weakling, *inkosi*," he said significantly.

"True! And you know the orders of the drill?"

"No, *inkosi*," Guffa frowned, "but—"

"It is no matter," Simmons interrupted. "Listen then: You shall be corporal—" Guffa beamed. "But if, after today, any one of these men come on parade dirty you shall be no longer corporal."

Guffa glanced threateningly up and down the line.

"They shall be clean, *inkosi*," he promised fervently.

"Also," Simmons continued dryly, "should any one of them appear on parade cleaner than you, that one shall become corporal in your place.

"Is it understood?"

"Yah, *inkosi*? It is understood and it is most just."

"And you others?"

"We understand, *inkosi*," they answered.

"That is well. Go to the head of the line, Corporal Guffa."

His order obeyed, he smiled at them—a cold, calculating smile that had little of mirth in it.

They fidgeted uneasily.

Somehow—anyhow—they obeyed him.

"One pace forward—march!"

The ragged line came forward, halted at attention, their rifles on the ground behind them.

"A little you know of drill—a very little. But you are not soldiers—how should you know? You are not fit to carry the weapons of a soldier; you are not fit to wear the uniform of soldiers. Undress!"

Those that wore a uniform took it off, folded it at his orders and placed it on the ground behind them. Soon they all stood before him, naked save for loin-cloths about their middles, which they had worn under their shorts.

Simmons looked at them approvingly. After all, the dirt was only superficial; it had not touched their physique. Regarded as raw material, they were magnificent. It was only when he remembered that they were supposed to be well seasoned men that Simmons frowned.

"It may be," he said suddenly, "that some day you will become soldiers. First, though you must learn to hate filth. That I leave to you. You are not children, neither do I intend to take you to the river to wash. That is something which must come from within you—that desire to be clean for cleanliness' sake. *Ai-e!* Some day you may be soldiers. But first you must learn to obey. You shall listen then to my voice. Also you must know the drill—does not a child learn to walk before it runs? A little of that I will teach you."

And then he spoke to them no more—except to scourge them with commands of drill and biting words of scorn which accompanied the commands.

Round and round the parade ground he sent them—at the march and at the double; at a slow march and at the fatiguing gymnastic-walk. In rapid succession he put them through Swedish exercises which taxed every muscle, and when it seemed that they would drop to the ground from weariness, he sent them at the double around the little square again.

For an hour he kept them at it—wheeling and turning; forming fours, doubling again.

The sun was shortening the shadows.

"Halt! Attention!"

They faced him, breathing hard, their mouths agape, sweating profusely. But they were silent, their ears were open and when he walked slowly away toward the cook-hut, they did not relax from their tense attitude of attention.

He found the cook-house smelling cleanly of carbolic soap; little puddles of water stood here and there on the *dhaga* floor. But there were no cooking utensil to be seen, no crockery of any sort; the cupboards were empty—the hut was bare.

He went around to the back of the hut and saw Sixpence, assisted by several native women, scouring pans as if their lives depended on it.

M'Bosa was sitting a little apart from the others and he was cleaning the buttons of his tunic. His rifle, wrapped in oily rags, was lying on a box beside him.

The muscles of Simmon's face twitched; he almost smiled.

"M'Bosa!" he said sternly.

The man sprang to his feet. The women looked up with dull-eyed curiosity; Sixpence polished furiously.

"*Inkosi?*" said M'Bosa.

"I gave an order," Simmons said slowly. "I said that *you* were to help Sixpence."

"Pardon, *inkosi!* But these black cows are my women. They aid Sixpence while I go do something to make the *inkosi* forget the filth I was."

"My order was not empty wind, M'Bosa," Simmons reproved him. "I said—and I say, 'Help Sixpence!' "

He turned at that and went back to the others. They had not moved.

And again he drilled them—drilled them as if they had only just come on parade.

The sun rose, higher, higher. It was very hot, but Simmons, contriving always to remain in the shade, not exerting himself,

rarely raising his voice above a normal conversational tone, remained cool.

Clouds of dust hovered over the men. It settled on their steaming wet bodies and clung there so that they looked as if they had been daubed with yellow mud.

Back and forth and around he sent them, and finally bringing them up in column of twos, he sent them charging across the parade ground, out beyond it on to the naked veld, heading for a thick patch of thorn. They halted before the thorny barrier, marking time uncertainly.

"Forward!" Simmons yelled. "Who ordered you to halt?"

They did not hesitate then but charged through it, silent, uncomplaining, apparently impervious to the thorns which tore at their naked flesh.

Five times he sent them through that scrub and when he had them again standing to attention on the parade ground little rivulets of red streaked the yellow dust on their bodies.

He left them there while he went to inspect the skoff-hut.

M'Bosa was on his hands and knees mopping up the floor; Sixpence, wearing a clean white shirt—it was damp still from the wash and clung to the native's attenuated form—was setting the table.

Presently M'Bosa rose to his feet, his task finished.

"Go and join the men, *Private* M'Bosa," Simmons said coldly.

"*Yah, inkosi!*" the little man saluted and quickly left the hut.

Simmons grinned.

"Guffa'll have a hard time holding his job," he muttered in English.

Sixpence looked up inquiringly.

"You said, *inkosi?*"

"To you—nothing! Now bring skoff."

Simmons sat where he could look out of the doorway and see the men— M'Bosa had joined them now—standing stiffly at attention.

Sixpence entered with his breakfast—sour dough bread, eggs and indifferent coffee. But everything was clean!

Simmons ate slowly.

He was in plain sight of the men, yet, apparently, they did not see him, saw nothing except a vision of the men they intended to be and of the corporal's stripes each intended to earn.

"I've tested them hard," Simmons mused, "but they're made of the right stuff, I think. Tough men, all of them. Bet they were all warriors of Lobenguella in the old days—just the sort who have to be driven hard. They're like blooded stock. Left alone, they go to seed, content to rest on their laurels, as it were, and talk of the days when men were men. I know 'em." He laughed softly. "It was grand the way they charged through that scrub—bet they've got more thorns sticking in 'em than a porcupine has quills. I think they've taken it all right. If they haven't, there'll be —— to pay. Ah, well—

"Now who the ——'s that?"

A horseman had ridden on the square—a primly dressed man with a small, waxed mustache.

"Where is the white policeman?" Simmons heard him ask in the vernacular and smiled at the man's faulty phrasing, chuckled when the stranger repeated the question.

The Black Watch did not move—no one answered the white man's questions.

"Poor ——," he muttered, mistaking their fixed stare and unnatural silence for fear. And aloud, "There shall be no more harm come to you. I, myself, promise that. I have authority—"

Simmons rose at that and coming to the door, leaning lazily against the pole upright, called—

"You wanted to see me?"

The horseman turned in the saddle, his face red with wrath; then dismounted and strutted pompously over to the hut.

"I want to tell you," he spluttered, "that I have witnessed your brutal treatment of those men and I shall take it upon myself to report your conduct to the administrator."

Simmons nodded.

"You saw it all, then?"

"I did. I watched it through these—" he tapped the field glasses which hung on a cord about his neck.

Simmons' smile was very provoking.

"And you waited until it was all finished before you ventured to interfere?"

"I—I wanted to see just how far your brutality would go," the other stammered indignantly.

"And did it go far enough to please you?"

"You will find that it went too far."

"And yet I only gave them what they greatly needed," Simmons said mildly.

"A little lesson in discipline—just a gentle reminder that—"

"Discipline! A gentle reminder!" the other fumed. "They are all bleeding—that's where you lashed them, I suppose—"

"No," Simmons drawled. "That was the thorn scrub—I'm afraid it does tear the flesh. But you didn't see me use the *sjambok*, surely?"

"No, I didn't," the other admitted reluctantly. "I inferred that."

"Inferences are dangerous—sometimes," Simmons commented.

"But I saw enough—" the other twisted his mustache with thin, nervous fingers—"and I shall report the matter. You will doubtless hear from your commanding officer in the course of time. That is all. Good day."

He turned and clumsily mounted his horse.

"You're rather young for a missionary, aren't you?" Simmons asked provokingly.

"I'm not a missionary," the other snapped. "I am doing a valuable piece of research work, aided by my sister, beyond the border and—"

"Have you got a strong escort with you?" Simmons asked with quickening interest.

"We have a few devoted porters—sufficient for our needs. An escort is not necessary. The natives are friendly."

"They are reputed to be hostile."

"A reputation not deserved, I assure you. I have no doubt that a man of your caliber would have difficulty with them—natives are quick to estimate a man's true character—but we can go unarmed among them without fear."

He gathered up the reins of his horse.

"Good day, trooper."

"My name's Simmons," the trooper said pleasantly. "And yours?"

"Banning—you've probably heard of me."

He spurred his horse and cantered away.

Simmons returned to his breakfast.

"Banning!" he mused, his brows knit in puzzled thought. "Where have I heard of him before?"

SUDDENLY he remembered.

Sergeant "Paddy" Boyd had spoken of him just before he left headquarters to come up here.

"Listen, Simmons," the sergeant had said, "the Bannings are up that way somewhere. They're two —— prigs, amateur missionaries; they think they've been specially created to reform the world and they go about looking for something to report. But treat 'em easy, lad, if they happen to run across you. They're relations of his Nibs, the administrator."

"Oh—" said Simmons now and poured himself another cup of coffee.

"Oh well," he said five minutes later and forgot all about the Bannings.

Then he rose to his feet, carefully adjusted his tunic so that it was free from wrinkles, put on his helmet and, his spurs jangling musically, marched out to his men.

"One pace to the rear—march!"

The movement aligned them beside their rifles.

"Take up—arms!"

The order was executed with clockwork precision. Their drill sense, which had become atrophied through months of nonuse, was coming back to them.

"Shoulder—arms!"

He nodded approval and then passed slowly down the line, halting before each man and looking him squarely in the eyes.

Satisfied with what he saw, he stepped back.

"Tomorrow—and for a month of tomorrows," he said, "I will drill you. After that, if your blood is red, your hearts white, you will be soldiers. Now you are soft. The little drill we have done, the very little drill—" they grinned at that—"this morning had tired you. Tomorrow we shall drill a little longer, a little harder. That is all now except—" he paused significantly—"at sundown I shall inspect your quarters."

"P'rade—dismiss!"

The days passed quickly. Gradually Simmons brought his men to that degree of excellence for which he strived. It was not an easy task. There were many backslidings. It was too much to expect that they could always show the keenness and willingness of that firstmorning, and Simmons was too just to expect it. But he persevered and in his treatment of the backsliders he showed his understanding of the black man's mind, showed his ability to think black.

And so the time came when he could play with them, could relax on occasion the strict military discipline and take them on hunting expeditions. He always dressed

in mufti at such times; the men who accompanied him wore only a loin-cloth, carried spears and knobkerries instead of rifles, and there was nothing about them as they sat yarning about the campfire to suggest they belonged to a military organization.

They called Simmons *Mushla ameyhloe*, on these hunting expeditions—the name expressed their affectionate regard for him and told of his prowess as a hunter.

Strongest proof of the strength of his personality and the success of his manner of dealing with them was the ease in which he could drop and take up again the ritual military life. A slight change in the tone of his voice and the naked men, who lounged by the fire talking of the day's hunt, became on the instant soldiers; their attitude, their bearing seemed to clothe them in full uniform.

Just before the season of rains began Banning came again to the post.

At the time of his arrival Simmons was serving out rations to the men, adding to each ration, as a personal gift, a large hunting knife and a bag of tobacco.

"I am glad to see that you are taking your 'choke off' in the right spirit, trooper," Banning said abruptly.

Simmons looked up, puzzled.

"I don't understand," he said slowly.

Banning smiled smugly.

"I was referring," he said precisely, "to the letter which you have, of course, received from your commanding officer. You see I wrote to my uncle, the administrator, as I warned you, telling him of your conduct. Today I received a letter from him saying that he had instructed your O. C. to severely reprimand you. And so, I ride over here—" he hesitated.

"To gloat?" Simmons suggested.

"Of course not," Banning said hastily. "But I thought it was my duty to see how you reacted to the 'choke off.' You might have gone into a rage, you know, and have taken it out on the Black Watch. And if that had been the case— Well, I repeat, I'm glad to see that you're taking the matter in the right spirit. I shall notify my uncle."

"You'd better do nothing of the sort," Simmons said slowly; he was greatly tempted to drag the conceited young ass from the saddle and spank him severely. "You see I haven't received any letters from headquarters for over two weeks."

Banning looked chagrined—then laughed.

"I'm afraid I can't believe that," he said. "Only a strong rebuke from your C. O. could be responsible for the way you're treating these fellows now."

He indicated the men of the Black Watch with an airy wave of his hand.

Simmons sighed.

"Ah, well! I said once before that you were very young. Won't you off saddle and stay for skoff?"

"No, thanks. My sister is expecting me to join her. She is waiting for me at Marka's kraal."

"Why don't she come with you?" Simmons asked with idle curiosity.

"Why—ah—one doesn't—" he stopped, confused.

"You're rather an obnoxious prig, aren't you," Simmons drawled. "That doesn't matter much. And you're a —— fool to leave your sister alone at Marka's kraal. And that does matter. Better get back quick."

Banning looked as if he were going to make some heated retort, thought better of it, wheeled his horse and, jabbing in his spurs with unnecessary force, rode hastily away.

"Thuso!" Simmons called, and the next man on the roll call stepped up to receive his ration and presents.

That same afternoon a runner arrived with mail from headquarters. It contained an officially worded reprimand—a very severe reprimand—of Simmons for his "brutal treatment of the Black Watch as reported by a creditable witness."

Accompanying the reprimand was a personal note in the spidery scrawl of Simmons' C. O.

You're a —— fool, Simmons," it read. "Of course I understand what it was all about—but why the deuce didn't you take the trouble to soft soap that pin-headed ass Banning? I'm afraid this affair'll pay the dickens with your hope of promotion——

SIMMONS awoke from a deep sleep, conscious that something was wrong. He opened his eyes and looked about the well built, orderly hut. The walls reeled about him at a dizzy speed.

"Steady!" he told himself, but his voice sounded feeble, seemed to come from a great distance.

He tried to sit erect, partially succeeded and then fell back with a groan—the fever had left him very weak.

He closed his eyes and tried to concentrate on the fear that had awakened him.

Outside sounded the dreary *drip-drip* of water—it had been raining, he thought, for years and years. In the far distance he heard the dull, monotonous booming of drums. That held his attention for a little while until he concluded that it was only the blood pounding in his ears—the result of many strong doses of quinine.

Presently a murmur of voices sounded. A white man's voice—insistently querulous. Again and again it was overwhelmed by the soft murmuring expostulations of natives, only to rise again, more sharply defined, louder.

"I must see him." Simmons vaguely recognized the words.

"No one enters." That was M'Bosa speaking! "The *inkosi* is sleeping. He has a fever."

And then the white man's voice—

"Stand aside—or I shoot!"

"And will you kill us all? Speak softly, white man, for if your yelping disturbs the *inkosi*, you will not live long."

"M'Bosa!" Simmons called and though his voice was no louder than a whisper, the little native immediately entered the hut.

"Is all well with you, *inkosi?*" he asked anxiously.

"All is well, M'Bosa. The fever madness has gone—taking my strength with it. There is a white man outside."

"*Yah, inkosi!* He tells a mad tale. He—"

"Let him enter and tell it."

M'Bosa looked dubiously at Simmons' wan face, then quickly withdrew.

A moment later the man, Banning, limped hastily into the hut.

"——!" he ejaculated prayerfully. "Then you really have got fever?"

He slumped down in a near-by chair and buried his face in his hands.

He was in a frightful condition—smeared from head to foot with mud, his clothing torn, blood oozing out from a wound in his thigh.

He raised his head presently; his face was drawn, haggard-looking; a light of desperate fear was in his eyes. He tried to rise but dropped back with a moan of pain. His wounded leg had stiffened—the muscles were numb.

"Suppose you tell me what it is all about," Simmons said slowly and ran his thin hands through his red mop of hair.

Banning started.

"The natives are out," he droned in a tired, spiritless monotone. "Their witch-doctors told them that we were the cause of the heavy rains. They've captured my sister—they're going to sacrifice her to the river spirits today. They nearly got me, too, as I rode here for help. My horse foundered back there and I've been crawling in the mud for hours. And it's all to no purpose. You can't do anything, sick as you are. The Black Watch won't follow me. But I'll take your horse—"

He looked at the trooper—Simmons' eyes were closed; Banning thought he was sleeping, then pulled himself to his feet and stood swaying there, his spirit urging him to return to the aid of his sister, his body too weak to obey the urge.

Simmons opened his eyes.

"Sit down," he said with something of his old strength, and when Banning obeyed, continued—

"Who's captured your sister?"

"The people at Marka's kraal. They—" Simmons silenced him with a weary gesture.

"Where are your camp followers?"

"They deserted two days ago—at the first sign of trouble. The curs! And I treated them like friends!"

Simmons smiled wanly. Then—

"Do you know when they plan to—to sacrifice your sister?"

"They're waiting with her at the river near their kraal. They are watching the water. When it rises to a certain tree growing out of the bank, they'll throw her in—bound—God! And I sit here talking."

He tried to rise again.

"Sit still, you fool," Simmons said roughly. "You can't do anything—you're crocked and I'm crocked. I'll send the Black Watch. They—"

"They'll be worse than useless," Banning cried despairingly. "How can you hope to send them against their own people—alone—without a white man to lead them?"

"They'll do it," Simmons' wiped the beads of sweat which stood on his brow; held himself rigid in a vain attempt to stop the fever ague which shook him. "They'll

do it," he said again, "unless you were right and I have treated them badly."

Fumbling on his pillow he produced a whistle—blew two short blasts.

The big corporal of the Black Watch came into the hut.

"*Inkosi!*" He saluted and stood rigidly at attention.

"You know the kraal of Marka?"

"Yah, *inkosi.*"

"You know that his people have a white woman prisoner and intend to sacrifice her to the river spirits? You have heard this *inkosi's* tale?"

"*Yah, inkosi!*"

"Then take all the men—M'Bosa will be second in command—and bring the white woman back here."

"Do we go armed, *inkosi?*"

Simmons nodded.

"But there must be no killing," he added, "if that can be avoided. That is all. Go quickly. There is no time to waste."

Guffa hurried outside. They heard him shouting orders; they heard the sound of naked feet padding in the mud—and then silence save for the *drip-drip* of the rain.

Banning groaned—pressed his two hands hard on his wounded thigh.

"I've been a fool—a conceited idiot—I thought I knew all about natives. And now—"

"Stop whining, Banning," Simmons cut in impatiently. "You've done all that a man could do. You couldn't help things even if you were able to ride my horses and go with the Black Watch—you'd have to wait for them. If it's not too late—and it isn't—they'll pull your sister out of trouble. I don't suppose the natives really intend to harm her anyway. They—"

He talked on and on, putting all his strength and spirit into his voice, attempting to console and encourage the other.

His voice became weaker—became barely an audible whisper.

"It's only another lesson in discipline," he muttered. "For us as well as them. We have to wait and—"

When Sixpence came into the hut a few minutes later he found Banning in an unconscious heap on the ground—the man had lost a lot of blood—and his *inkosi*, Simmons, babbling again in the delirium of fever.

FOUR hours later Corporal Guffa of the British South Africa Native Police, halted his eleven men on the bank of a river close to the wide ford leading to the kraal of Marka.

The opposite bank of the river was lined with natives who yelled vindictive threats at the soldiers.

On a ledge of rock which jutted out from the bank, overhanging the river, stood two witch-doctors. Between them they supported a white woman—the lashings of rope which bound her almost completely hid her form.

Corporal Guffa advanced to the very edge of the shelving bank.

"*O-he,* Marka," he called. His powerful voice carried above the sullen roar of the river, the lashing fury of the rain and the yapping clamor of the people. "*O-he,* Marka. A word with you."

A big, burly man strode out on to the rock and stood beside the witch-doctors. The shouts of his people instantly hushed.

"What is it, black dog of the white fools?" he asked.

"Word has come to us that you have put your hands upon a woman," Guffa replied. "Maybe your eyes are blinded and you do not know she is white; maybe your ears are stopped and you did not hear her voice; maybe your wisdom has gone from you and you forget the evil that will surely come to you should you harm her."

"You are long-winded," Marka shouted back. "To the meat of the matter. What would you?"

"We come—and our voices are the voices of all white men—to open your eyes, to unstop your ears, to restore wisdom to you. Deliver the woman to us, unharmed, and this folly of yours shall be forgotten."

Marka threw back his head and laughed at that; his people derisively beat upon their shields with the hafts of their spears and the noise sounded like thunder rolling along the hill-tops. The gray-green sky darkened; the rain beat the surface of the water into a yeast, yellow foam.

Marka held up his hand and the people ceased their clamor.

"You bark loudly, dog," he said, "but your tail is between your legs. What we have we hold, see!" He pointed to a tree which grew out, almost horizontal with the surface of the river, from the bank just below the rock; the yellow flood was almost

lapping the base of the tree trunk. "See! The rains have been with us only a little while, yet the flood has almost reached the tree. That is because the river spirits are angry with us for suffering this white woman and her fool man to dwell among us, disturbing the bones of those who begot us by digging the ruins of the kraals that were. Therefore the woman shall be thrown to the river spirits that they may be appeased. When the flood reaches the tree—then the sacrifice shall be made."

"If you will not bring her to us," Guffa said, "we will come and get her. It will go ill with you then."

Marka laughed.

"The way is before you, dog, if you care to tread it. My warriors will be waiting to greet you if you should succeed in fording the river."

He leaped back from the rock and a moment later his voice could be heard exhorting his people.

"Forward!" commanded Corporal Guffa and led his men down the steep bank to the water's edge.

They did not hesitate there. Into the water they marched, their rifles held high above their heads in their left hands—each one firmly clasping the bandolier of the man on his right with the other hand.

Step by step they moved forward—Corporal Guffa at the left of the line, down stream; the little man, M'Bosa, at the right of the line.

With each forward step the water deepened. To their knees—to their waist—They gasped at the icy chill of it.

The current plucked at them; they swayed like reeds.

M'Bosa stepped into a hole and disappeared under the surface of the water with a jerk which broke the hold the man on his left had on his bandolier.

The line halted. The people of Marka jeered triumphantly.

There was a swirl in the water; it passed swiftly down the line. Guffa leaned forward and grabbed hold of a tunic, held firm, fighting against the pull of the current, lifted M'Bosa above the water and shook him.

"My rifle! It is gone!" the little man spluttered.

"It is no matter, little one. Almost you had gone too," Guffa grunted. "Get to my right and hold fast. If the river gets you again there will be no one to catch you.

"Forward!"

And now the warriors of Marka pelted the thin line with mud and stones.

The water came up to Guffa's armpits—up to M'Bosa's chin. The men were breathing hard; they swayed drunkenly.

The shower of stones and mud ceased. The people who lined the banks were silent, awed by this grim, silent advance.

Marka shouted an order and a continuous flight of assegais and knobkerries hurtled through the air, splashing into the water just before the advancing men. Guffa looked grave. So far they were out of range of the spears but soon—another yard or two——

M'Bosa whispered to him. He nodded.

"Hold tight, little one," Guffa said. And then, in a drill ground voice—

"P'rade—halt!"

The men obeyed—glad of a momentary respite before advancing to the death which was just ahead.

"P'rade—load!"

They struggled frantically to retain their footing as they released their hold on each other and it seemed for a moment as if they would all be swept away as they fumbled with their rifles, opening the breach, thrusting a cartridge into the chamber.

"At their feet—take aim—!"

As cooly as if they were on parade, as if the elemental force of the river were not trying to drag them down, they went through the manual of arms.

"Fire!"

A ragged volley answered the final order. Not a bullet hit the mark for which it was aimed. The men could not steady themselves sufficiently for that. Most of the shot buried themselves harmlessly in the river not many feet in front of the marksmen, others screamed through the air above the heads of the people on the bank. One creased the fleshy buttocks of Marka and he, yelling with pain, leaped high into the air and then fled panic-stricken, followed closely by his people.

Only the two witch-doctors remained. They, grim, implacable, loyal to the spirits they served, crouched behind the woman, their eyes fixed on the surface of the river. It was so close now to the tree trunk that an occasional wind-created ripple lapped it.

"Right slant—forward march!" shouted

Guffa and his men advanced, inclining toward the shelving of rock.

They were almost in the lee of the bank now—the water shallowed, the force of the current slackened.

With a loud cry to the river spirits, the witch-doctors pushed the woman off the rock and fled. The men of the Black Watch were sprayed by the splash as the woman's body hit the water. They were very near.

For a moment they could see nothing; thought, with a feeling of despair, that they had failed to execute the orders given them.

Then M'Bosa gave a cry of delight and breaking rank rushed forward and seized the woman just as she came to the surface.

Others went to his assistance.

High above them on the bank sounded the angry yells of the people of Marka. Ashamed of their flight, they were returning to see that the river spirits were not deprived of the sacrifice.

Again Guffa took counsel with M'Bosa and then, at his orders, four men picked up the woman—they were too hurried to unbind her, besides; she was easier to carry that way—and started the return trip. The others backed slowly after them, facing the people of Marka, and more by the bold front they presented than the menace of their rifles, they kept the warriors from pursuit.

Neither did they fire again, although assegais fell all about them; although several of them were bleeding from wounds; although they knew that one volley would send the natives scattering again and enable them to make the return passage in comparative safety.

Five hours later Corporal Guffa halted his men on the parade ground, dismissed them as prescribed in the regulations, and then went to the hut of the *inkosi* to report simply:

"Instructions received and fully carried out."

# KENTUCKY PLAY

## *by* Arthur Woodward

AN IDEA of the early pioneer's idea of "playful" habits may be obtained in the following incident related by the Reverend J. B. Finley, a pioneer preacher in Kentucky and the Ohio Valley.

According to Finley, one of the principal meats of the backwoodsmen and their families was that of the black bear.

In the fall of the year, when the beech-nuts were about ripe, the Kentucky hunter repaired to the place where the beech-trees were thickest, for the nuts from those trees were especially liked by bruin. Before the nuts were ripe, the bears often climbed the trees and raked the nuts from the branches. This was called lopping by the settlers. While the animal was thus engaged, it was an easy matter for the bear-hunter to steal upon the unsuspecting bear and shoot him without much trouble.

One autumn day a Kentucky emigrant, whose name is not recorded, went into the woods with his ax to cut a broom stick and, observing a bear in a tree lopping, the man decided it would be an easy matter to climb up behind the engrossed animal and slay him with the ax.

He reached the foot of the tree all right, but to his surprize, Mr. Bear didn't wait for him to make the climb but slid down the trunk and confronted the alarmed man. He swung his ax valiantly but the bear, stretching out a huge paw, warded off the blow and seized the man's left arm with his teeth. In retaliation the borderman played border tactics of a rough and tumble fight and promptly sunk his teeth into the bear's nose. In the ensuing struggle the heavy weight of the bear threw the man to the ground. Again the fighting custom of the frontier was brought into play; that is, the man used his thumb and calmly gouged out both eyes of the brute. The doleful screams of the agonized animal brought aid to the frontiersman and bruin was soon despatched.

In after years the man who had thus so unceremoniously fought his shaggy foeman was asked by a friend who came to visit him—

"Well, how do you and the bears make it."

The Kentuckian laughed.

"——!" he said, "they cain't stand Kaintucky play. Bitin' an' gougin' air too hard fer 'em."

Nice playmates, those Kentuckians.

*Author of "Tolley Tells Himself," "The Oily Bird," etc.*

WHEN Tex MacDowell and I—I being the six feet and a half of leanness and lankiness known to the border as "Slim" Evans—were ordered to Daysville, Ohio, from the Border, we were in somewhat of a quandary. That is, we couldn't decide whether a more or less temporary tour around Cook Field as test pilots was preferable to the Border or not. We'd have a chance to fly some good ships, see a good show occasionally and be furnished with a few other of the amenities of a civilized life. Yet there's something about the Rio Grande that gets into your blood.

After many conferences, both in Mexico and Texas, we decided on two things. One was to wait and see, and the other was to fly up to the lush State of Ohoho by plane, if possible. Twelve yards of official correspondence proved it was possible, so during the dying days of July we set forth from McMullen in MacDowell's DeHaviland for our two thousand mile trek north. The mechanics had gone over the ship with a fine tooth comb and had done about everything to it except gold-plate the Liberty. She was perfect from machine-guns to rudder, and we left the McMullen air-drome in a cloud of dust with no apprehensions.

All of which is additional testimony corroborating the fact that we were both slightly cuckoo. Anybody has to be, to be a flyer, in the first place, and in the second place, he is crazier to let himself deliberately in for a trip like that when the railroads run excellent trains with great speed and frequency between Daysville and San Antonio. In the third place, the idea of me, myself, ever getting by with such a trip without trouble should have been laughable in itself. If I was landing on a billiard-table ten miles square and there was one small hole in it, I'd hit the hole and wreck.

Well, we got by for a long time, at that. In fact, when it all happened we were on the last half of the next to last lap of our trip. That means we were fanning and fogging up the line from Nashville, Tennessee, to Louisville, Kentucky. We'd figured on stopping at Camp Henry, thirty miles out of Louisville. There was a hilly pasture lot which was dignified with the monicker of Goddard Field and had been used as such. It bore as much resemblance to a flying-field as I do to a midget, but ships had landed there occasionally without cracking up.

However, when we got over the place we discovered that this mountain slope was grown to grass, the camp deserted and that we must slide along thirty more miles into Louisville.

Well, the last thirty miles were the hardest.

Before mentioning, however, matters and personages such as Happy Ellis, the Ohio River and seventy-two straight hours of poker, it behooves me to put you wise to one thing in advance. Despite the fact that I, Lieutenant Slimuel X. Evans, of the Army Air Service, am narrating the tale, said narration concerns mostly Lieutenant Texas Q. MacDowell. I won't say that I didn't lift a finger here and there, usually in the wrong place, but he filled most of the flushes and in general was responsible for the figuring, fighting and flying that went on.

That being settled, here goes. I believe I left "Tex" and me stranded above the remains of Camp Henry.

It was the middle of the afternoon, and Tex, who was flying, headed the D. H. due north toward the Ohio River. We'd heard plenty about the river being at high tide, so to speak, generally inundating the surrounding country, but getting our first glimpse of it was really a kick.

We got over it, and started to follow it into Louisville. It seemed as though we were following a continuous lake. It was over its banks in most places, and where it wasn't long arms of water, like small rivers themselves, reached far back into the country. The entire terrain was as soaked in water as my friend George Groody is in liquor every St. Patrick's Day, and, as I said before, in many places it was a good-sized lake. Miles of fields were under water.

The river itself was a pretty sight, making one gasp at the beauties of nature. It's surface was ornamented with decorations like houses floating along, a piano here, an uprooted tree there, here and there a dead cow. Houses along the river which were still standing were deserted, it seemed.

All but one. Five or six miles ahead, standing out against the low-hanging mass of smoke which was Louisville, fifteen miles ahead, a white farm-house stood out on top of a high hill on the very banks of the river. And there was smoke coming from the chimney of it.

It was completely surrounded by water, and the nearest land must have been a full eighth of a mile away. A ramshackle barn, a barnyard, and one good-sized field leading from the water to the house comprised a little temporary island which looked as calm and peaceful as its surroundings did soaked and desolate.

Here the long arm of coincidence took a hand. We were only ten or twelve miles from Louisville, and all was well, when our Liberty motor started to cut out. Just a couple of cylinders. It didn't seem serious—probably fouled plugs or something—and we knew there was a reserve field at Louisville. Personally, I figured we'd make it easily—but as usual, I was wrong.

It got worse by the second, until finally only one or two cylinders were working and we were diving downward. Tex jazzed the throttle, turned on the gravity tank, did just about everything as we started down, but it was of no avail. We just had to land—and nothing but water-soaked desolation to land on. The Ohio a turbulent mess, and its lakes and rivers a mass of wreckage, the fields within gliding distance, waterlogged swamps—it looked bad for the home troops.

All but one place. That was the sloping field which abutted on this stranded farm-house. So Tex sent the ship gliding downward, and I, after one look, sat back comfortably and cursed. If anything was radically wrong with the ship, no telling when we'd get off Farmhouse Island, and it was almost a cinch we'd have to lose a night in Louisville under the best of conditions.

Suddenly Tex, a tall, lean, wide-shouldered Southerner with a pair of wide-set gray eyes that always glow and sparkle when anything's afoot, turned to me and pointed down. I took a look, and saw three men emerge from the farm-house, all with guns.

That was enough to glue my eyes to them, and I speedily discerned that one of them, out in the middle of this hillside field, was waving at us. He was waving us on, it looked like from his motions.

It grew more and more curious as we circled downward, Tex jazzing the throttle all the time and the twelve-cylinder Liberty backfiring and wheezing and making more fuss than a boiler factory. Those long waves from side to side certainly seemed to mean only one thing—get gone and don't land.

WE WERE possibly twelve hundred feet high, the Liberty pooping along on about three cylinders, when Tex looked back again, threw back his head and laughed. Those three men were shooting at us!

Now there was a right curious thing. A city of a hundred thousand people only ten

miles away—and here were three strangers peppering away at a strange airplane!

Ordinarily I am a calm man, but that made me sore. Here we were more or less up against it already, with a bad trick landing to make on an unknown field, and three bozos take it upon themselves to take pot shots at us for no reason. Undoubtedly they had a reason, though, at that. And that thought suddenly drove from my mind all thoughts of Louisville, changed the Ohio River into a beautiful and tranquil sight, that farm-house into a mansion and those prospective murderers below into gentlemen of the finest stripe—if they didn't kill us before we met 'em.

In brief, there was action ahead.

I grabbed Tex by the shoulder with one hand and cut the throttle with the other.

"Put the fear of God in 'em—and maybe we can get by!" I yelped. "We've got to land there, anyway!"

Tex nodded, and the next minute we were using precious altitude by diving steeply. Then Tex pressed the trigger, and our machine guns sprayed bullets a considerable distance away from the trio on the ground. He just circled 'em with the little lead pellets. When we were three hundred feet high they had reached the house on a dead run—and suddenly our motor was running full blast again!

Evidently a plugged jet or gasline, and the terrific dive had sucked the obstruction out, as often happens.

Tex brought the quivering ship level, and the whine of the wires died. Then the son-of-a-gun turned to me, and he didn't need to say a word. I just nodded. He wouldn't have gone on to Louisville right then if the brass band had been waiting a week to meet us.

I kept a close watch on the house as Tex dropped the ship low over the water, skimmed across it, and then pulled up slightly as we hit the slope. He dropped the D. H. to the ground within twenty feet of the water, and the uphill roll and the slightly soggy ground caused us to cease moving within a hundred feet.

"Let's taxi to the house so the motor'll shield us—" he started, but I cut in:

"No, let's get out here. When they see who we are they won't shoot. They're afraid somebody definite's coming to see 'em—and who is there who'd come by airplane for a bunch of farmers to be afraid of?"

Tex considered the matter, and finally we compromised and taxied half way. Then we climbed out, and stood beside the plane. Maybe you think we had a pleasant moment, there in full view of the house. Each of us had a Colt strapped to our sides, but a blind man could have seen we were Army officers and that we had an army ship. Our machine-gun was no good to us, being attached to the motor cowling. That meant that it was pointing upward at quite an angle when the ship was on the ground. To aim it we'd have had to aim the ship

We waited—not a sign of life from the house. Then Tex drawled—

"Let's move, eh?"

We started forward slowly, leaving our ship idling. We might need to make a getaway. And nobody but a duck could have done that little thing without a plane. Now that we were on the ground we could get a better idea of how thoroughly clogged the surrounding water was with débris of all ages and conditions of servitude.

We'd proceeded about ten yards when a shot cracked out.

"Stay whar ye air!" boomed a big voice, and three more shots that whined close to us gave us a bit of a hint that possibly we ought to stop our stroll and rest.

On the heels of the last shot the three men came out of the house. Two of them knelt, and leveled their guns at us, while a third circled around out of line with the guns and started toward us.

"One move and ye're dead, both o' ye!" he yelled, and there was a twang to his speech which was not of the Kentucky mountains.

As he came closer, I got a better view of him. He was short, and very stocky and heavy. He had a body like a barrel, surmounted by a round head with short gray hair around the edge of a bald spot. He was wearing glasses, and a small white mustache bristled belligerently.

He stopped and took a long look at us. Then, without a word, he turned and waved to the others. They, too, started walking toward us, rifles ready.

I felt as though we'd won. It might turn into nothing, and yet there was a little chance that something—

"I wouldn't have missed it for a farm!" chuckled Tex. "Doggoned if I don't get a kick out of this! Look at 'em closing in stealthily, eh?"

We never said a word as they approached slowly, never taking their eyes off us. The two men with guns were funny Indians, at that. One was a burly, black-headed fellow of about thirty, I should say, with a pair of big brown eyes and a full-lipped mouth. His black eyebrows were drawn down over his eyes in a scowl, and he looked like a very turbulent gentleman with a rotten temper and a bloodthirsty disposition. He was dressed in overalls, boots, and hickory shirt.

The other one was worse. Small and slender, and dressed in flashy city fashion from patent leather, cloth-topped shoes to loud tie and tight-waisted coat. Both held rifles as though they knew which end the bullet came out of, likewise.

At first it was humorous, then nerve-wracking, as they crept toward us silently, their eyes never leaving us except when they darted to the plane as though expecting something deadly to hop out at them from it.

"They're worse scared than we are," whispered Tex through motionless lips.

I watched the old man, mostly, although he had no gun. His fleshy face was covered by a gray stubble of beard, and behind his shining glasses his eyes seemed mild as a sheep's. Then I noticed that there was a curious film on them—an impenetrable curtain over their light depths.

"Throw daown your guns!" he barked in that high voice of his.

He was standing about ten feet away, now, and the others, coming at an angle, stopped slightly farther away.

I found my tongue—one thing I never mislay because I use it incessantly—and inquired politely—

"Just why, may I ask, should my esteemed confrère and I dispose of our weapons?"

"Because we say so!" snarled the little fellow suddenly, and his thin lips parted over his teeth.

"And who are you?" asked Tex lazily.

We were trying to act bored.

And suddenly it seemed as though an uglier feeling permeated the air. Before, honestly, I'd had a feeling that all of a sudden the chorus would appear from the wings, so to speak, and sing the finale, or that the curtain would be rung down and the orchestra play. I couldn't believe things were actually as they seemed. But, for some unknown reason, as the tense silence lengthened I could feel my hair rising slowly.

Tex, lounging easily beside me, evidently felt the same as I did. I glanced down at him—he's six feet one, but I can look down on his head—and his eyes were narrowed and his mouth had ceased to droop mockingly at the corners.

"Listen, *caballeros*," he drawled, so slowly and softly that it seemed there was an actual space between each slurred word. "Explain the *status quo*, will you? We're a couple of Army aviators flying on to Daysville, Ohio, our motor cut out, this was the only place to land, and we're shot at by you people whom we've never seen before. And now you're holding guns over us! It seems to me there might be a few explanations laying around the pasture here somewhere—"

"By ——, if it ain't Slim Evans I'll kiss your foot to a cherry red!" came a deep, throaty voice, and my off eye flickered to the suddenly blazing orbs of the big black-headed fellow.

The old man let out a sort of neighing whistle—a very difficult feat—and the little fellow seemed to coil like a snake.

"And that forced landin' stuff!" he spat. "I heard their motor goin' like a house afire—so did you, Luke! It's idlin' all right now!"

FOR a minute I didn't know which way to jump. I'd never in my life before seen that big chap who'd called my name—and besides that, they had us cold turkey on that forced landing stuff. If they knew airplanes as well as that, nothing on the face of the earth could make them believe we'd landed because we had to.

"Are you and Mr. Evans acquainted?" drawled Tex, glancing at me. His eyes, gentlemen, were so bright you'd think they were two holes into a furnace of fire.

"I s'pose Ellis sent yuh and thought he could get away with it!" bayed the big fellow, and now he was striding forward.

Suddenly I had a feeling that it was time to take the bull by the horns. So I burst into speech.

"This is a —— farce!" I snapped. "I am Slim Evans, yes. But I never saw you before in my life. And by —— I'm getting tired of standing here talking in circles to you three bozos here for no reason. Spit out what you've got to say!

"And listen to this, too!" I cut in as the old man started to speak.

I whirled on him, and stuck out a finger to make it more impressive. The thing was getting on my nerves, and it was a relief to speak out.

"Where do you three get this stuff of your trick rifles and all that? And telling us to drop our guns? If you're so —— big and smart, and want to get yourself into trouble big enough to be worthy of your talents in getting out of it, shoot and be —— to you! If Daysville doesn't hear from us tonight there'll be a lot of investigation and search, and if you think you can bump off a couple of army officers and get away with it just because the river's flooding why you just try it. We won't drop our guns, and we'll hop up and holler right now that this Deadwood Dick stuff here doesn't make any hit with us!

"Now, how the —— do you know who I am, mister? Come out from behind your popgun and shoot your wad!"

For that minute I had 'em on the run, mentally. They'd taken what I said without saying a word, and now they were casting glances at each other—half uncertain ones, it seemed.

I had a hunch what the explanation of knowing who I was would be. Casting modesty aside for the moment, the facts of the matter were that in the five years of the Border Patrol's existence considerable had appeared about it in the public prints, to use the flossier and more elegant phrase. Magazine articles had supplemented newspaper reports of divers troubles occurring on the border in which we'd taken a hand.

And I'm the kind of a physical freak who can't be mistaken. Once hear or read the description of a Border flyer who's six feet six, so thin he can wear a two-inch pipe for a raincoat, possessed of a nose which would make an elephant's trunk look like a handbag, and you wouldn't make many mistakes, would you, if you saw a Border flyer who fitted that description? We'd said we were flying from the Border, and consequently if this bozo had read anything about the patrol he might have picked me out.

Having figured this out laboriously in the moment of uncertain silence, all my props were blasted out from beneath me. For the little runt in the clothes of many colors found his tongue first, and snarled:

"Huh! That forced landin' yarn's the tipoff, Luke! Evans here won't never have heard o' Ellis, I suppose! O' course, Evans and his pal just happened along here and landed right at this minute!"

"Who's Ellis?" I demanded.

"Didn't I tell yuh?" barked the little bird. "Happy Hal's a perfect stranger t' him!"

Right here, while I was striving to clear my mind, the old man stepped in, and suddenly his eyes were the brightest things I ever saw as they bored into mine.

"You don't know an Army flyer named Ellis?" he demanded.

I searched my memory. I was positive I didn't.

"No," I said positively. "There may be one—if so, I never met him or heard of him. Have you, Tex?"

MacDowell, to my intense surprize, seemed to hesitate.

"N-no," he said, sort of lamely.

"Applesauce!" snarled the little fellow. "They're lyin', both of 'em, only Evans is a better liar! Listen, Jameson. There's no use o' going any further with this! Call your shot! We're hooked, that's all—if we don't take it on the lamb! And I, for one, ain't in favor o' foldin' up like a parasol and lettin' Hal Ellis get away with nothin'! These fellers are pals o' his. He didn't dare stick his nose in here himself, and he sent them, that's all, figurin' we'd be pie for 'em! They flew down from Daysville on purpose! And the only reason we wasn't easy for 'em is that we didn't let 'em get the drop on us!"

There was cause for considerable thought in that last speech. My intellect is somewhat sprained at best, and you can imagine how close I was to fracturing my medulla oblongata in trying to surround the implications in Weazel-Face's remarks. The unknown Ellis was an army flyer, friend of ours, so good a friend that he was sending us to do some dirty work for him because he was frightened himself—

"He called this felluh Tex, didn't he?" the big fellow called Luke said at this point. "This hyar's Tex MacDowell, that's who it is! And as Moe hyar says, maybe you want t' quit now, but I'm goin' through with it. I'm as willin' t' be hung for a sheep as a lamb!"

Unmistakably Luke was a mountaineer. You can't mistake the "hyars" and "thars" and "keers" of the breed.

But that didn't mean much to me then.

And Tex, his eyes dancing with that fierce joy in a contest which was a part of him, apparently was at as much of a loss as I.

I'd have given a month's pay to have a one-minute talk with Tex. If we could have coagulated on some line of action, and compared whatever notes we might have in mind, maybe we could have got somewhere.

Luke's thinly veiled ultimatum brought forth an instant of heavy thought on old Jameson's part, it seemed, and Luke and the little fellow glared at him as though challenging him to take their plan or leave it. And while that heavy glaring was looking on, my roving eyes surveyed the farmhouse in passing.

Unless my peepers had given out, I saw at an upstairs window, looking out upon our tableau, a bearded face glued to the old-fashioned, many-paned window.

I caught MacDowell's eye, and twitched my head slightly toward said window. MacDowell looked long and carefully, and as he looked his already wide mouth widened still farther and he chuckled.

That seemed to arouse the old man into life. And from the moment he took a hand, I noticed there was no doubt as to who was the dominating force in that trio of thugs.

"Let's stop talking at cross purposes," he said in his high, nasal twang. "First off, gentlemen, much's I hate to, you've got to drop your guns."

The two rifles were poking into our ribs a second later, and the stormy brown eyes of Luke and the small, hard gray ones of the little fellow had expressions in them that made me put my hands up and never say a word while the old man abstracted my Colt. Tex did likewise. There was nothing else to do, despite our high and mighty talk of a moment before.

"Naow we can talk," stated the old man, taking off his glasses and polishing them. "First off, boys, I never was so sure that Happy Hal Ellis was an Army flyer. I shouldn't be a bit surprized if Evans and MacDowell, here, didn't know 'im at all!"

"Then why'd MacDowell hesitate when he answered?" barked the little fellow.

That had been bothering me, too, and as I looked at Tex I saw him grinning. In a second I knew the answer. He'd deliberately acted the way he had in order to draw the three out further. Let them think maybe he did know Ellis, and see what that brought forth from them.

"As a matter of fact, *caballeros*," he stated now, "I was just thinking when I answered. I never heard of an Army flyer named Ellis. Er—he hasn't got a beard, has he?"

And he glanced casually at that window.

AS THAT tall boy said that, the three of them stiffened as though shot. That was Tex all over—shoot it all any time. Luke glanced back at the house, and the others whitened a bit. That bearded face was no longer in sight, thank ——. Doubtless Tex had noticed that before speaking as he did. What he'd wanted to find out he had—that the bearded man, for some reason, was very important to them, and that a suspicion on their part that his whereabouts was known to us gave rise to considerable timidity, not to say panic.

That film gathered over the old man's bright eyes, and he rubbed his gnarled hands on his overalls nervously.

"As I was sayin'," he went on, as though nothing had happened, "I kind o' figgered that if Ellis was an Army flyer he wouldn't be mixin' in what he did, and I ain't quite able t' figger out haow two officers like these here'd be comin' so fur t' help 'im—or even t' mix in on it at all except by accident.

"Haowever, boys, don't git uppity, naow," he said quickly as it seemed they were both about to speak. "I know what we're up against, and we got t' take no chances. Here we are, helpless, on the one hand, on account o' bein' marooned here. On the other, bein' marooned may save us from trouble, long's we decided t' hold off a while anyway. So the thing t' do is settle down nice an' quiet, treat these two flyers nice but watch 'em just in case, y' know, and wait till we can put the deal over'n see what's what!

"As for you two officers, mebbe apologies 're due yuh. We don't know—yet. But we're up against danger from all sides; we ain't welcomin' no visitors, an' we didn't want yuh to land, be ye friends o' Hal Ellis's or not! An' make no mistake about this!"

Suddenly his jaw went out, his eyes contracted to pinpoints behind his glasses, and his mouth tightened into a cruel gash across his seamed face.

"Make one false move—and don't think we won't take steps appropriate!"

He wasn't bluffing, and right then I didn't

feel like calling his hand. Tex injected himself into the conversation easily.

"We don't want to interfere with whatever's up," he stated. "So Slim and I'll just fix up our ship, take off, and leave you all to your own devices."

"The —— yuh will!" snarled the little fellow, and his finger seemed itching for the trigger. I'll swear he was as deadly as a rat. "Yuh'll stay here until we're —— good and ready t' let yuh go. I, for one, believe yuh are a friend o' Ellis's, and yuh're not gonna git away from here until we're ready—and gone!"

That was that. And if you don't think it was maddening to stand there and wonder what it was all about, you're crazier than I am, and they don't run around loose when they're as crazy as that. It seemed to me that I'd blow up and burst with a loud report unless I found out what it was all about. I generated an idea, as I do once every so often, and said as casually as I could—

"Well, let's go over and turn off the ship, Tex, as long as we seem to be week-end guests."

"Watch yoreselves, though," said the mountaineer called Luke savagely. "Make one move—and I'll shoot. And if yuh think you can git away in yore plane—see that squirrel?"

We saw said squirrel, chattering in a tree. Luke, without apparent careful aim, brought him down with that rifle. I'd heard how mountaineers could hit the hind leg of a louse at half a mile, and there was a demonstration.

"And if yuh think we wouldn't dare do it," put in the little fellow, "why don't think we wouldn't take a chace on bashing your heads in, sticking you in the plane, rolling it to the edge of the river and shoving her in!"

That was a pleasant idea on a nice sunshiny day, and I excogitated it—quite a bit as Tex and I started for the ship a few yards away.

"Nice boys," I remarked. "Landing here was a —— of a good idea of yours."

"I never had a better," he grinned.

Seeing that I'd get nowhere on that line, I inquired—

"What do you make of this, Watson?"

"Search me," he chuckled. "Ever see anything like it? First of all, though, evidently the whole gang are a bunch of crooks. Ellis must be, or he wouldn't be posing as friend of ours. And he must be a flyer, don't you think so? Otherwise, why would they have been expecting him by airplane?

"Furthermore, they're scared to death of him. That means probably he's a good man—and that they've done him dirt some way. My idea is that they were all in some crooked deal together, double-crossed each other some way and are each scared of the other or something like that."

"If they were pretty sure Ellis was going to drop in on 'em for revenge, that doesn't argue that they think this Hal is being scared into an early grave by *them*," I reminded him as I cut off the gas from the front cockpit.

"That's right, too," admitted Tex. "Furthermore, there's something incriminating, or valuable right here on this forsaken island, or they wouldn't be so —— anxious that nobody on earth get here. They tried to shoot us away—and now that we're here and know 'em they're afraid to let us go for fear we'll tell somebody they are here! They're scared of the whole world in general and Hal Ellis in particular, seems like."

"The more I think of it the more it seems to me that that stuff about thinking that you and I dropped in here at Ellis's request to drag something out of them is applesauce," I announced spaciously. "Granting that this Ellis is an imposter pretending to be an army flyer for crooked purposes, he wouldn't be so utterly cuckoo, would he, as to hint at our helping him out on call? The old man said something about Daysville, at that. Ellis must have known we were ordered there."

Tex shook his head.

"That was just panic talking," he suggested. "Your flagpole style of architecture is undoubtedly familiar to Ellis; he described it to back up his yarn; and naturally those bozos couldn't be mistaken even though they'd never seen you.

"By the way, who do you suppose Alfalfa Ike is up there on the top story? From their attitudes, movements and expressions I don't believe they want us to know he's among those present."

"Doggoned if I know," I said sincerely. I cocked an eye at the window, and then at our three enemies. Luke was watching us like hawks, rifle ready. "Say, Tex, suppose

we could get away without being shot right now. What would you do?"

He chuckled.

"I wouldn't hurry too much," he drawled. "We just landed in a nest of crooks who don't want their present whereabouts known, that's all. And we might as well sit in and see what's up, eh?

"Now listen. I don't like the idea of our being prisoners here. Do you suppose we could hornswoggle these boys some way and get the upper hand, and poke around and see what's up? I wish I knew what'd been going on in this sovereign State of Kentucky. Maybe one look at a newspaper would make it all as clear as a glass eye."

We discussed ways and means for a moment, Tex gazing absently into the distance. It was a funny scene, sort of, at that. Hens running around in the barnyard, the water all around us splotched with wreckage, Louisville's smoke visible far in the distance and then those two guns to remind us that the peaceful old farm-house wasn't so —— peaceful after all. And that window at the top to give the last touch. I got quite a kick out of it.

"Slim! Don't point or look too openly—but isn't that a plane high up there? Over that big tree that's half down—the one with its branches in the water? See that speck underneath that little white cloud? Just a pinpoint?"

It took me a moment to pick it up, but a flyer's eyes can pick up a plane where the layman sees nothing but atmosphere—and Tex was right. It was one.

"LISTEN," he said, his gray eyes glowing with enjoyment, "if that's an Army flyer, he'll come down and investigate when he sees he can land. If it's a civilian plane—maybe. If it's Hal Ellis—"

"He'll get scared off before he lands—or killed afterward!" I concluded for him.

"Shall we take a chance on what we talked about—and greet Ellis ourselves? It'll be saving a life, at that. They're set to kill him. They're so sure the unknown Happy Hal is up to something I've got a hunch—"

"Sure," I told him, but it was sort of hard to get out.

We had to hustle. The minute that plane's motor became audible they'd be far from asleep.

We walked toward them leisurely, and I was as cool and calm as Paris was on November 11th, 1918. I hate to fool with a thing like we were going to. It takes up your time, uses up your strength and is quite a nervous strain. And yet, my fear was half pleasant, if you get what I mean.

They were still talking, and hadn't seen the plane yet. The far-off roar of it was audible to me, now, but of course I was straining my ears to get it. If four seconds could go by without them hearing it or scanning the sky for the man they dreaded, it would be hunky-dory—maybe.

"Well, now what?" I said genially as we stopped, me in front of scowling Luke and Tex before the little gunman.

The old man was to my left about two feet. The Colts were laying on the ground, in their holsters, possibly five feet away.

They didn't say anything for a moment. Then the old man started—

"O' course, naow, mebbe you don't—"

I saw MacDowell's left hand raise to his cheek. Right then I pointed toward the ship.

"There's an airplane!"

As though pulled by one string, their heads turned as their bodies stiffened. In a split-second Tex and I were at them. My two hands closed on the barrel of Luke's rifle, and believe me, whatever strength there is in my stringbean body went into the wrench I gave it. I got it out of his hands and with a full swing I knocked the old man down as I leaped back.

I didn't have a chance to point it before Luke was at me. Tex had the other gun, but the little fellow was swarming all over him and for a moment he couldn't use it any more than I could mine. Luke leaped in, and it seemed as though all the stormy passion of the mountain people had been distilled into his glaring eyes.

In a second I decided what to do. The old man was motionless on the ground. I dropped the gun as Luke's arms closed around me—it would be more trouble than it was worth—and raised my knee just in time to keep him at a slight distance, even though his arms were around me in a crushing embrace.

And he was stronger, I believe, than any man I'd ever tackled. His grip felt as though he could pull the Washington Monument over. On one leg as I was, I toppled over, Luke on top of me, but as we

fell I pushed my knee outward with all the power I could muster. His grip slackened for a moment, and I slung my body to one side. In a second I was on my feet. He was scrambling for the gun and I threw myself at him. Once again we were clinched on the ground.

For about four seconds that was a hot fight. Personally, I didn't fight as a gentleman should. As for Luke, he'd never heard of the esteemed Marquis of Queensberry. He tried everything, including biting my ear. All I did was tear, kick, scratch, punch and curse. Due to my false teeth, I didn't dare bite, myself.

Then Tex bounded over, just as Luke was twisting my arm backward while I was throttling him with the other hand. Tex tapped him on the dome with the rifle he had regained. Luke went to sleep.

Tex laughed for a full half minute—and he rarely laughs. Just grins and chuckles.

"Let's get some safety wire and tie up our merry playmates and then watch yon ship and pray," he said finally, which we did.

Then we lugged them into the farmhouse and laid them on the floor of the old-fashioned kitchen. A wood stove, table with oil-cloth covering, a cat asleep underneath the range, milk-pans and all that junk decorating the shelves—it was as peaceful as one could wish.

The roar of the plane was plainly discernible now. Tex and I decided to collect all the artillery and stay inside rather than greet Ellis, if it was him, in plain sight. He might see us as we gathered up the Colts and rifles, but if he did he couldn't be sure who we were or what we were doing.

"I wonder if the boy with the shrubbery upstairs is a prisoner or not?" I asked oratorically, glancing at the stairs which led up from a little hall between the kitchen and the sitting room. "He gives me a bit of a creepy feeling."

"Let's wait to investigate, and then do it warily," Tex suggested. "Yon plane is descending, it seemeth, and if so the presence of our gondola will make him very curious. Providing it's the famous Ellis, of course. Slim, I have quite a desire to meet this *hombre*."

"You and I both."

There was not a sound from upstairs. I kept an eye and an ear cocked in that direction, and each of us had our Colt in our hands.

Then the plane started circling the field and we got a look at it out the window. We took a good long look, too. It wasn't a type of ship I was familiar with at all. It was big, two seated and, brothers, it was fast. Painted a dark khaki, as though it might be an Army ship. Just one man in it, and he was a big man, too. He swooped down right beside our plane, roared past it about three miles a minute, and then zoomed the house with the roar of his motor, making the milk-pans shiver.

"I'll be doggoned if that isn't one of those new Army type observation ships!" exclaimed Tex finally. "I've seen pictures of 'em—you know what I mean. The Dougal—that's the type and they make a hundred and fifty an hour, carry all kinds of a load—adaptation of the ones for the round-the-world flight."

I got it in an instant. They hadn't been distributed around the Army yet, but we'd seen pictures of 'em.

"Maybe from Cook Field—that's the only place that has 'em," I suggested, and my heart sank. "That means it isn't Ellis—"

Then I knew I was wrong. As he banked for a landing, there was no Army number on the side of the ship at all. If it was Ellis, he sure had one of the newest airplane types. A Liberty motor in it, and as the prop. revolved slowly in the glide, I was certain it had an all-metal propellor.

He was apparently a knockout flyer—shipped his ship and landed right at the edge of the water. He started walking toward the house—a great big fellow with a long, sweeping, hooklike nose.

I looked down at the floor, and met the old man's bright eyes. They were as hard as diamonds in his face, and seemed to glint with as much light as those gems do.

"Cheer up, Papa, we won't hurt you," I told him. "I guess your friend Ellis is here—"

"Fur ——'s sake, Evans, let us loose!" implored the old fellow, and his shrill tones were almost a shriek.

"Don't worry!" I advised. "Nobody'll do anything to you while we're here, unless we do it ourselves."

"He's coming—and he's puzzled to death," chuckled Tex. "Wonders where everybody is, I guess. Got your gun ready? He hasn't got one in sight. Come on!"

WE MADE an impressive entrance upon the scene, stepping from the doorway with guns leveled.

"Mr. Ellis, I believe?" inquired Tex.

The big man before us stopped dead in his tracks, and for a second his weirdly fascinating eyes seemed to be having trouble taking in the meaning of the situation. Then, with utter composure, he bowed.

"The same," he said, in a very deep voice. Suddenly his cheeks wrinkled deeply in a wide grin. "This," he stated, "is what I call a —— of a situation. Do my eyes deceive me, or is it Lieutenants Evans and MacDowell I see before me?"

"The same," I repeated his first words, and for the next few seconds we looked each other over.

I've seen some types in my time, but Mr. Happy Hal Ellis wins the slightly used beef-stew as far as I'm concerned, and I don't know whether I can explain the reasons for that statement or not.

He was dressed like an Army flyer—boots, khaki breeches and O. D. shirt—but he did not wear the collar ornaments of an officer. He was as big as MacDowell, and boasted a pair of really tremendous shoulders. In fact, they were so tremendously wide and thick that they made his neck seem almost as long and thin as mine, and the face above said neck longer and thinner than it actually was. And that was lengthy and bony and narrow enough, —— knows.

It seemed that his eyes extended all the way across it, and they were as level as though laid out with a rule. And so narrow they were like lines of cold gray light. At the slightest suggestion of a smile they seemed to close entirely. Wrinkles ran from their corners around his head, and when he smiled his ferocious smile those said crinkles were very deep. His eyebrows were black as night, thick, and as level as his eyes. Between them were two deep vertical lines above a nose that swept outward and downward. That was thin, too, in harmony with the rest of his face.

His wide mouth was a line of red, also running straight across his face. His cheeks were so lean they looked sunken, and the muscles around his mouth stood out as though the skin was stretched to the breaking point over them. His jaw was long and bony and square, and his whole face gave the effect of mahogany skin stretched above bone, with no flesh to fill or cushion in the hollow boniness of it.

When he smiled it seemed that there was a wolfish quality in his smile—a sardonic ferocity which made one think he was fairly licking his lips as he looked at you and figured just what he'd do with you for his own advantage. His teeth were very large, very even, and very white, and they parted so little when he did grin that they appeared to be clenched together. Long arms, very long legs, stringy power in every line of his erect body—he was at once a fascinating, striking, and weirdly awesome figure with personality gleaming in every look out of his eyes and every furrow in his face.

That name Happy Hal was as mockingly fitting a cognomen as I've ever seen plastered to a human being. He gave the effect always of a laugh just below the surface if not on top—and the quality of that laugh was peculiar. It was a laugh at you, and not with you, if you surround my meaning.

After I'd admitted our identity, he looked us over thoroughly, smiling that toothy smile. Then he said easily:

"Where are my boy friends, —— 'em? The old crook, the city crook and the mountain desperado?"

"They're at present on the kitchen floor, roped and hogtied," drawled MacDowell. "It appears that explanations are in order. We'll start, and then we want some from you, ranging from why you pose as friends of ours and an Army flyer to the identity of a mysterious man with a beard in the upper story—"

"A man with a beard in the upper story?" he boomed, and I nodded.

He just stood there and grinned—grinned at the whole wide world which was his oyster.

"Oh, the —— fools!" he said finally, and there was triumph and contempt in every word. "Speak on, Lieutenant. I presume you had a forced landing here while flying from Nashville up to Louisville, eh?"

He spoke with entire correctness, and evidently had knowledge of the parts of speech. And, as I kept watching him, I decided that the man before me was a strong *hombre*. In his direct, burning look and the set of his head and the line of his jaw there spoke a man—maybe a crooked one, but a man.

"Now listen," ordered Tex softly, and briefly told what had happened.

Ellis listened, and when he wasn't actually grinning he seemed to be. The big, jeering, hook-nosed —— had a good time while Tex gave his slow résumé of the afternoon.

"Now shoot, Ellis," Tex ordered. "There's stuff afoot we want to know about before we decide what to do. First off, why do you pose as an Army flyer?"

"I'll tell you all about it," said Ellis airily. "Sit down, huh? Oh, hold your gun if you want to. I want to smoke and be comfortable."

We sat down, and he started.

"In the first place, I really do know you two—by sight," he started, and to me he mentioned Sparks Field, where I was back in the early days, and to Tex the town of Arilla, Texas, where his dad still owned a ranch and where the Texan had originated.

"So I knew you when you were fifteen—and Slim in the Army by sight and reputation, and I've kept up with you for years through Army papers and whatnot. I was cashiered from the Army myself back in '17. What my name was then is nobody's business. Incidentally, I was cashiered for something I didn't do. Not that it makes a —— bit of difference to the Army, me or anybody else. But I was a flyer before either of you ever saw an airplane."

He said that calmly, and grinned his wolfish grin. And I believed it implicitly.

"So I dubbed around in Mexico, came out with some money, did some flying and finally got me this ship and have been using it to run aliens over the Canadian border. Made me a good wad, never got caught, but it was getting sort of hot and I lit out. Now I'm going to China to teach young Chinks how to fly. Got in touch with that job through smuggling many Chinks over the line. Leave from Frisco in two months.

"As for the Army, I find it expedient, at times, to pose as an Army man, ex-Army man and various gradations from National Guard to Reserve Corps, for business reasons. I keep up with Army affairs, through the Army papers, giving parties to flying officers, visiting the fields when I get a chance and all that. I know as much about ships, men and conditions in the Air Service as you do, and the careers of the leading flyers in it. Probably more. I find it helps me put over little deals.

"Sometimes I go strongly to it. I did it in this little undertaking.

"All of which accounts for the fact that when the three boys here took a look at Slim, the human flagpole, whom nobody in the world could fail to pick out if they saw him in uniform and had ever heard about him, they naturally identified him. And I'd told them you two were friends of mine, that Slim and I had been in oil together, and that you'd fly a thousand miles to help me pull a legitimate deal if I asked you. See?"

And he grinned at us. Without affectation, shame or humility, but in a mockingly matter-of-fact way, he'd told us this while we listened. And the more he talked the more I liked the perverse nut before me. A poor benighted heathen, I remember thinking, but a first-class man. He looked and acted like a freebooter, ranging up and down the world and squeezing what juice he could out of it.

"I'VE picked on you two often, on account of you having been prominent because of the Border Patrol. Kennard, Jennings, Groody—the whole crowd have been friends of mine to hear me tell it, at one time or another. And I know all you've been and done better than you do yourselves. You shouldn't kick. I'm a good press agent."

Tex chuckled, and I had to grin myself. It sounded funny, at that. All the wind was taken out of our sails. Did you ever think about what you'd do if you had excellent reason to knock —— out of a man, found him, told him you were going to do it, and he said:

"You're absolutely right. Go to it. I'll put my hands behind my back and you can punch as long as you like."

It happened to me once, and I felt like a —— fool. And that was about the way I felt while Hal Ellis was talking.

"Now it appears," pursued Ellis tranquilly, "as though you two had saved my life. I believe it from what they did to you, although up to then I wouldn't have figured they'd had nerve enough—any of 'em. Old Jameson is a cautious, crooked old Yankee who can see a penny on the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, Moe Stern is a cheap city slum bootlegger and crook who'd steal his grandmother's false teeth and hock 'em for a quarter, and Luke Barstow is a mountaineer who'd carve his brother into mincemeat if he got mad enough in a fight but wouldn't kill a chicken

in his right mind. But I guess they all got sort of worked up. What I want to know is why they've got Old Zeke Chatfield hung up here in the garret yet?"

"Listen," I told him, pointing my long and bony forefinger at him, "ever since we alighted in this benighted, watersoaked gob of mud in the Ohio River everybody's been curving fast chunks of language around our flapping ears, making mysterious motions and sounds and leaving us with our eyeteeth gnashing and our eardrums reverberating with wrath because we didn't know what it was all about. Start from chapter one, providing there's no preface, and do us a complete story about the whole deal. We may do something or nothing about it—but come clean!"

Ellis stared at me, and it seemed as though his lips should have curled in a grin, but they didn't. Then:

"Sure," he said. "You're in on it, as a matter of fact, from now on. I just figured it out.

"It's simple. I came roving down here, just passing through, got acquainted with these three men and right away got an idea. You've heard about Zeke Chatfield, haven't you?"

"Nary thing," Tex told him.

"Well, he's got a long feud record, of course, but the last two weeks he's had all Kentucky by the ears. Feud with the Roys broke out again, and old Zeke went wild. Killed five in the mountains, and not satisfied with that, went into two small Kentucky towns and popped off three Roy relatives living in 'em, and then, hunted as he was by a posse of five hundred, showed up in Lexville and got young Obe Roy, who'd been in the Army and was working there.

"The end of it was that the rewards offered for the old coot totaled several thousand bucks. Every one of these towns, the State, the county authorities—everybody chipped in. And old Zeke galloped over the mountains, his tobacco-stained beard waving in the breeze, and thumbed his nose at 'em all. They got nowhere.

"I figured out after meeting Luke—he knows the mountains like a book and belongs to a neutral clan—that between my airplane and his knowledge of the mountains, we could nail old Zeke. Needed another man, so Luke got Moe Stern, and old Jameson was financier and general adviser. I was to get half and they were going to divide the other half. I spotted Zeke, and the plan was for Luke and Moe to get him, get to my plane a few miles away in the nearest field and I'd fly 'em all out.

"Everything went off right, except that these three double-crossed me. Luke figured a way he could get old Zeke out by himself, I guess, and they left me sitting there in the mountains, waiting, and a lot happened. Long story. Anyway, I just got out with my life, if you get me. Took me a couple of days to recover, and here I am to wring something out of their hides!

"Get hold of Lexville papers for the last two weeks, and you can read all about Zeke. And that's him upstairs—must be. Now why in —— didn't they deliver him to jail right away, before the flood caught 'em?"

That did seem to be a mystery, at that, but I was thinking of something else.

"Why wouldn't they let Tex and me get out of here when we suggested going peaceably?" I inquired oratorically.

"Simple," grinned Ellis, taking off his helmet. His hair was as black as his eyebrows, and parted in the middle and slicked down close to his narrow head. It had the effect of throwing his bold profile into more prominent relief.

"They figured you'd report what you'd gone through, in Lexville. The Chatfield clan, as well as others, have adherents in the city. The minute you talked the news would be front page stuff. When you mentioned something about a bearded man that was enough to make 'em believe more strongly yet that you were friends of mine, and knew what was up and that Zeke Chatfield was part of the plan. They'd have let you go if they'd been sure you didn't know anything about Zeke's being a prisoner here.

"That's front page, as I say. In an hour or two it would be in the mountains. And as quick as they could get here and swim or otherwise cross this river, his clan would be on deck to rescue him before they got him to jail—and the lives of those three wouldn't be worth a nickel."

He looked from Tex to me, grinning that cruelly mirthful grin, and took a last drag of his cigaret.

"You've got the guns—what are you going to do?" he inquired. "Bear in mind that anything I've said to you about my past doesn't mean a thing. By repudiating

what I said I go scot free, because you can search the country over and not find proof of any crime of mine. So I can look you in the eye and wonder just what's in your mind."

He sat there looking at us and, as for me, there was nothing definite on my mind except my stringy brown hair. I didn't know exactly what to think or do. Ellis's story, disarmingly frank about himself, sounded right to me. I'd have more inclination to believe at least a percentage of what he said than the words of the other three. Jameson I wouldn't trust, nor Moe Stern, and as for Luke—you never can tell about one of those stormy mountaineers when they're up to something.

Tex looked at me and grinned that slow grin of his, with one side of his mouth drooping. In his eyes there was a question—and I knew what it was.

There was no particular reason why we shouldn't go out and take off. We could make Lexville before nightfall. The sun was setting then, but it was only a five minute hop. That thought again gave me a kick. A big city was close to this marooned island. And yet I had unconsciously come to think that we were miles from anywhere squatting in the midst of the wreckage, which the ever-rising Ohio was bringing down.

My eyes flitted to Ellis, and it seemed to me that I could feel that he thought we did not trust him, or believe what he said. Our silence seemed to presuppose distrust of him, and doubt about what to do.

"Before you make up your minds, I've got an idea, as I said before," he stated. "There's no —— reason in the world why I shouldn't load Zeke into the ship now, take off, deliver him and beat it with the six thousand, is there?"

"That depends on what we thought about it," Tex told him gently.

"You've got the guns—but what in —— have you got to do with it, just morally speaking?" inquired Ellis directly.

"Merely to make sure justice is done," drawled Tex. "Your yarn sounds all right, at that, but having gone through what we have this afternoon, it seems to behoove us to sort of see the thing through to the finish some way or other. I know one thing. I wouldn't want to leave you four on this island to fight it out. I wouldn't rest easy tonight."

THAT flashing grin on Ellis's face —and then he said:

"Those swine? They're not worth killing, and I could make 'em jump through a hoop like a bunch of trained pigs. Let's go in."

We did. I was anxious to see the showdown. As I hereinbefore stated, I didn't know what our jump ought to be, but I did know that with my usual —— foolishness uppermost I wanted to see all that was going to come off. I knew that Ellis figured we didn't trust him. What did he have up his sleeve?

Those three men, laying there on the floor, looked up at us with the eyes of cornered rats. Not Luke, either, exactly. He looked up with raw murder in the murky depths of his prominent optics. They stuck out so far he ought to have been able to see behind him.

"So here you are!" grinned Ellis. "Nice fix, you double-crossers!"

Not a word—and then Luke burst into speech:

"Double-crossers ——! Not 'til we found out that you'd tried tuh make a deal with Win Barstow, my second cousin, t' git Zeke out by yoreself before we come!"

"Who told you that?"

"Win Barstow did!"

"Your esteemed relative, Luke, is a —— liar."

Ellis stood there above his helpless foes, and it was suddenly obvious to me that he dominated every one of them as he had said he would. They were scared of him, hypnotized by him. And I could understand why.

"Why is Zeke upstairs? Why didn't you take him t' jail right away?" he demanded, and his long, glinting eyes were on Jameson.

The old man's light eyes dropped, and he twisted uneasily.

"Th' amaount of the reward is goin' up every day, most," he squeaked in his twangy voice.

Ellis's mouth widened.

"Money again!" he sneered. "Takin' a chance on all the Chatfields in the mountains coming down on your heads! Willing to go to —— and back for an extra dime, and scared stiff like the rats you are every minute!"

It doesn't sound pretty, and probably it wasn't. And yet there was something about that bird—the way he stood and seemed to

dare the world, making no concessions whatever to anything or anybody, that had a bit of the sublime about it. He was talking to bound men—but he hadn't expected they would be bound when he'd deliberately come down to meet and beat 'em on the home grounds.

"Now listen, you three. There's no reason why the three of us shouldn't take Zeke now and beat it and leave you here. But despite the fact that I'm as thoroughly hated a man as there is in North America—meaning that I've got no friends and many enemies—there isn't a living soul on earth who can say that Hap Ellis didn't give him value received for every thing he ever did for me—and got a square deal. The only time I've ever got dishonest money was from the Government, and I'll swindle the Government that broke me every chance I get. Patriotism ——! I tried to fight for it and it spit on me!"

He looked over at Tex and I, naked ferocity in his eyes, as though expecting we'd interfere. I felt no call to. Let him fight his private battle.

"That's the reason I'm leaving it, for that matter," Ellis went on. "But that's neither here nor there.

"Back to business. You tried to double-cross me and didn't get away with it. I've got every right to double-cross you back—yes, and I ought to, you Yankee miser and you cheap moonshiner and you runty little bootlegger! Swine, every one of you!"

They took it—not a word in return. It was as though they knew it was useless to talk back.

"But Luke, here, was necessary in the deal, and he did his share. The only reason I've got a chance to make some dough is because he was on deck. So I'm going to lean over backwards and give you an even chance that you don't deserve. We'll gamble for that reward—six thousand, is it, now?"

They were listening now with concentrated attention, as though every word that fell from his thin lips was a well cut gem of purest ray serene. Jameson, especially, could almost be seen to drool, and Moe Stern licked his lips avidly. Luke just looked and hated.

"These flyers were never my friends. You found that out. That was a bluff of mine. But that's neither here nor there. Without meaning to, they saved my life, and Hap Ellis always pays. They share with me, share and share alike.

"Know what we're going to do? And you can take it or leave it. We're going to sit down to a poker game right in this house. Not for money—for the body and person of Zeke Chatfield!"

Narrow eyes gleaming in the twilight of the darkened kitchen, his pirate's profile outlined against the dim light of the dirty window, lips curled in that white-toothed smile, he half crouched as he laid down the scheme to the three who hated him.

"You've got plenty of matches and you've got cards. The three of you play together, and the three of us. Make any arrangements you want to. We start with so many matches apiece—six-handed game. We play until all three men on one side or the other are cleaned. If one man goes broke and others on his side want to give him matches to sit in again and play a hand—that's their business. But we play without stopping, by ——, until one side is cleaned. Five hundred matches apiece, table stakes! And the winning side gets Zeke Chatfield to deliver to the authorities.

"Take it or leave it!"

There was an instant of tense silence. The kitchen was dark now—

Suddenly Ellis whirled on Tex and me.

"I included you without asking. Speak up, Lieutenants. You may not be friends of mine, but I know that MacDowell, at least, can play poker!"

He was right there. Tex was a genius at poker, nothing less. Down on the border there was a poker game about every night—and I'd had ample opportunity to see the big Southerner play. Ellis, having apparently kept in closer touch with the doings of flyers than a jail warden does of the activities of his prisoners, doubtless figured he'd not be carrying any dead weight playing with Tex.

As for me, I'm just so so. In poker, as in flying and other things, I sort of muddle through, and once in a while I get a flush when somebody else has a straight, or something like that, and end up with at least my shirt to go home in.

Nevertheless, it was a somewhat mangy proposition, at first sight, and I summoned Mr. MacDowell to one side for a few heavy articulations about the matter. Ellis stood there in the middle of that dark kitchen,

and watched us as we stood in sight of him in the next room.

"What do you think, Tex?" I inquired. "Somehow or other my delicate, fragile nature, as easily bruised as the petal of the dewy rosebud, deems that there is an element of sordidness in this. But it would be a lot of fun, and —— knows money is money."

"That's right," drawled Tex meditatively. "Look, Slim. There's no doubt that Alfalfa Ike upstairs is one of those triple-distilled murderers, call it feud fighting or whatever you care to. So it's legitimate to deliver him up to justice. If it isn't, we'd soon find out when we tried to do it, anyway.

"Likewise, evidently we're up against a gang of men who're nothing to brag about. Including Ellis."

"Of the four, he's the best," I told him. "He's just conceited and egotistical enough to want to do exactly what he said—be the benefactor, the man who pays his way and rewards any favor done."

"And we've got a legitimate right to share—if the money isn't too dirty to touch," agreed Tex. "At the risk of our own lives, say I heroically, we unconsciously saved his. If it wasn't for us, he'd not only not have any share at all in this, but would not even have full title to his neck. And it would be a lot of fun," he ended wistfully.

SO WE decided to throw in. To this day, I don't know whether I'm ashamed of it or not. I can't see any —— reason why we shouldn't play poker for a share in six thousand, under the circumstances—and yet the idea of playing for possession of even a criminal's body, so to speak, sort of goes against the grain. It all comes down to one explanation—a couple of cuckoo flyers couldn't turn down a chance for excitement. We had no business there in the first place, had no business staying in the second place and probably shouldn't have joined in with Ellis in the third place.

But I haven't laid any claim to perfection for us, have I, and in my brief descriptions of us I haven't included any hand-crocheted haloes enwreathing our classic domes, have I?

Any way, we did it, and that's that.

Our first move was to hide all the guns but two Colts, one for Tex and one for yours truly.

"Whether you believe we'll use 'em correctly or not, you've got to let things go that way," Tex told 'em. "At least, we aren't either proved or admitted crooks, and we've got no reason to trust any of you."

We hid the rifles in the barn, came back, and had supper by the light of a flickering oil lamp set in an iron socket over the table. Ellis took bacon and eggs and coffee up to Zeke.

When the table was cleared, old man Jameson got out several big boxes of matches, and five hundred apiece were counted out. We sat around the oilcloth table, the two sides alternating. I was between Jameson and Luke Barstow. Between Jameson and Moe Stern was Ellis, and Tex was flanked by Luke and Stern.

"Let's get all rules set, now," suggested Tex, lounging back in his chair. "We're playing sides, as I understand it—table stakes, otherwise no limit. If I, say, go broke, Ellis and Slim can either go it alone, or else stake me, out of their piles, to keep on. The first side that's broke loses."

"Right," barked Ellis.

He was leaning over the table, his head between his huge shoulders, as though he was literally gloating over the scene. It was as much meat and drink to him as it was to us, I guess.

"Now here's a point," Tex went on. "Playing sides, it's natural for me, say, to try to protect my partners' hand by staying in and drawing, for instance, or possibly helping him try to raise the other side out, or something like that. Now, are signals between sides included? Can one of my partners indicate to me how good their hand is, so I can help 'em, or not?"

"No!" declared Ellis. "No one knows what any one else has got."

"Well, that makes it more intricate," I interjected. "Suppose we make a rule that anybody caught cheating in any way loses all the matches in front of him. Inasmuch as it would take two to make that kind of a crooked deal, it would probably mean just one lone survivor for the other side. What say?"

"Who's going to be the judge?" squeaked Jameson excitedly. "All three on one side could get together and declare the others were cheatin'—"

"I'll be the judge!" stated Ellis serenely, grinning at us. "And don't kick! I, and I

alone, am giving you all this chance, am I not? Well, then I'm most competent to judge, and I won't judge without consulting with Tex and Slim. And you know by this time that those two aren't crooks, like you are. For once in your life you're up against somebody you can trust!"

So the game started—five hundred matches apiece. And within ten minutes after it had been going, Moe Stern bet four hundred and fifty matches—after drawing one card—and I had a flush!

Well, gents, I laid down. But that shows you what kind of a game it was. Two thousand dollars apiece dependent on it—and just one bet could clean a man. Another peculiar feature of it was that in almost every pot a majority of the six were in, if they had anything at all, in order to keep percentage as nearly even as possible. If three of one side were drawing against one of the other, as you can readily see, that one had all the earmarks of being a worm in a well populated bird-cage.

The game was an almost entirely silent one. Not a word spoken, sometimes, for two hours. And pervading it was that feeling of utter hatred and distrust. Each man watched the moves of the others like a hawk, and in their eyes there was a sort of hard, determined glitter. All except Tex and I were humped over the table, playing with concentrated ferocity.

At four in the morning our side was considerably behind, due to our comparatively loose play and nothing short of a genius for mind-reading on the part of old Jameson. He played tight poker, but he called once in a while, and when he called he won. Finally, at Ellis's suggestion, Luke set a pitcher of moonshine on the table, just as dawn was breaking.

All that day we played—every hand a new emergency, each one a possible break in the game. Outside the sky was leaden, and the waters of the Ohio remained at the flood. The fortunes of war ebbed and flowed, but always it seemed that our side was being whittled down. Finally, at midnight that night, with the oil lamp going again and Ellis drinking steadily but not showing it, he lost two hundred matches and was down to less than a hundred. Tex and I were a couple of hundred behind too.

Then it was arranged that one man be out all the time, in two-hour shifts. When he was out he was to eat and sleep. He'd be called at the end of two hours by the next man. Each one slept on a couch in the old-fashioned living room, in plain sight of the others.

All that night and all that day again. We got back some matches, and once were ahead. I'd never dreamed of a game like that—every man a fair poker player, some of them good, and each man playing with all his heart and soul. And the idea always in the back of my head that at the first opportunity our three opponents would be at our throats.

All of us drank a little to keep up our strength, except Ellis. He drank a lot, and it seemed to affect him no more than water.

I forgot everything but poker. It seemed to my bleary optics that that table was the entire world, the men around it the only inhabitants. I forgot who I was, what I was doing, even the stakes of the game. Time went by unnoticed. Big hands came and went—an hour here when it seemed we had our antagonists on the way toward losing, a desperate moment when a bet faced us that would have taken every match if we lost—and me with a small full house—an emergency every few minutes.

It was more like a fight for life than a poker game.

At ten o'clock in the morning of the third day, when we'd been playing about sixty hours, the break started to come. Inch by inch the three of them took matches from us. Ellis was acting somewhat drunk now, but I couldn't see that it affected his playing any. Finally Tex lost a bet of three hundred when he had a king full and Luke Barstow had four sevens. As the afternoon wore on we went down and down. Finally there weren't more than three hundred matches between us.

It got dark again. Jameson was just off his tour of sleep, and Tex was laying down, dead to the world. Five faces, haggard and wan-eyed, looking as though every man had been drawn through a wringer, were hunched over the table. Ellis alone seemed to be anywhere near himself. The others were barking at each other, snarling at mistakes, advising, showing in every move and word that they were strained to the breaking point. Outside it was very dark. It was about eight o'clock, and I was swaying in my seat. And yet, somehow, I never figured on quitting. In my dazed mind I figured the game would go on until the

Mississippi went dry, an eternal round that would never end.

Jameson was dealing, and as the spots of the cards danced before my eyes I saw four queens, pat. Stern, on the other side of Ellis, opened for fifty matches.

This was very high, and I was as sore about that as I would be to fall a couple of thousand feet above Death Valley and wake up in Paris. Luke Barstow glanced at Stern out of bloodshot eyes, and stayed.

I raised it fifty. I had a total of a hundred and fifty matches. Then I recollected myself. I was half asleep, scarcely knowing what I was doing. Before Jameson, the dealer, could say anything, I shoved in my other fifty.

"THERE goes the works," I told them. "She's raised a hundred."

Abruptly every one woke up. They seemed to tense themselves. If I lost it meant that there were only a hundred and fifty matches left between the three of us. Jameson looked at his hand, and stayed.

Ellis was all humped up in his chair, his narrow eyes as bright as though high-power electric lights were in them, and suddenly his thin lips curled in a half smile, half snarl.

"Slim, I can't help you," he said in his deep voice, and took another drink out of the moonshine pitcher, which was always full.

He threw down his hand, face up, and got to his feet, leaning over the table. There was a subtle threat in the hunching of his massive shoulders as he glared around the table.

The tension was terrific. It had always been there—for seventy-two hours—but now it was almost unbearable. I was serene in my mind, but my muscles were as fidgety as so many two-year-olds at the barrier.

Stern glanced fearfully at the eyes staring wolfishly into his own, and he licked his lips with his tongue. Then he stayed. And Barstow, his frown-wrinkles so deep that you could have hidden a card in them, also remained. There was no use of raising—I was all in.

Stern drew one card, Barstow two, and I drew one. Jameson took three.

Stern seemed to be coiled in his chair. No sooner had Jameson drawn than he slapped his hand face up on the table.

"No use o' any more bettin'!" he shrieked, and his voice rang from the rafters hysterically.

I tried to be nonchalant.

"Four queens," I remarked casually.

"Aces!" yelled Stern. "We got 'em, boys! Wake up MacDowell—"

As he spread his four aces Ellis straightened up.

"Wait a minute!" he roared. "You can't get away with that, you —— crooks! When Jameson came back from his sleep he brought a cold deck with him!"

He staggered back against the wall—he'd been drinking as much liquor as there was water around us—and threw out his hand as though to catch himself. As the three men, and I too, leaped to our feet, his hand went through the lamp chimney, and the next second the room was in darkness.

"Come on, Tex!" roared Ellis. "Get 'em, Slim, the crooks, and we'll get out of here!'

The next second some one—Luke Barstow, I found out afterward—was on my neck with both feet, a hand or two and I think a chair. It was dark as pitch, and in an instant we were fighting all over the kitchen. I struck out blindly, but quarters were so close there wasn't much force in my blows. I could hear Tex yelling something as he charged in, and then the table fell with a crash and I stumbled over the moonshine pitcher.

Shouts, curses and falling chairs and dishes made up a bedlam as we battled. I took terrific blows from shadowy forms, and gave them back to I know not whom. I was bruised, dazed, dizzy, fighting blindly with all I had in me. It settled down to a savagely silent struggle. I was on the floor under two men once, getting glass ground into my back, and wriggled loose when I rolled them both into the legs of the stove with a crash.

"All right, Slim?" called Tex breathlessly, and I panted an answer.

"Where's Ellis? All right, Ellis?"

I was too busy trying to knock Luke Barstow out to listen. A second later I caught the shadow of a chair coming toward me, and threw up my arm just in time to get a crushing blow on it instead of my head.

It sent me to the floor. It seemed to me that one man was fighting two over by the door—that must be Tex. Where was Ellis, who'd started the muss?

Then Luke's foot caught me in the side. With my mind full of surmises and fears, I got to my feet, and it seemed as though I'd had another drink or something, because I felt fresh, all of a sudden. The fact was, I was mad—and worried.

I wanted to get upstairs. I had a queer idea in the back of my head.

Just as I slammed Luke against the window, and it broke with a crash, I heard footsteps bounding up the stairs. Then, as I sent Luke to the floor with a good smash that caught him accidentally on the chin, I heard MacDowell's shout from upstairs, above the thud of footsteps running up.

"Zeke and Ellis are both gone! Get out to the ship, everybody!"

Then:

"Lay off me, you —— little Jew! Hey, you fool! Well, then, take that!"

And as I was bounding out the door a body bumped down the steps, and behind it Tex was bounding down, two at a time.

"He's got my gun, too, Slim!" he was shouting. "Watch out for him!"

I knew he meant Ellis. As I ran out into the night, closely pursued by Tex, it seemed to me that the whole situation was as clear as good gin. Ellis had deliberately started that fight in the dark when it became obvious we were losing, and he'd planned in the excitement to get Zeke into his plane and take off, leaving us marooned and decorated with the order of the double-cross. That brought on another thought. We wouldn't be marooned with our plane—he'd have put that out of commission.

I could hear noises out in the gloom. He was trying to crank up.

"Got out of the upstairs window with the bedclothes!" panted Tex. "And I'm sure he's got my gun. I dropped it."

"Don't come closer!" bellowed Ellis, and an eerie chuckle rang through the darkness, followed immediately by a shot. "I'm under cover, and you're not! And just as a matter of friendly warning—don't try to chase me in your ship. I bashed in both your elevators!"

Again that chortling laugh through the darkness.

"I knew he'd think of crippling our ship!" I told Tex. "Now—"

"Let's swing over, use our ship for cover, and get to it!" Tex interrupted, and I could fairly feel the fierce joy in the contest which was radiating from him.

Our ship was thirty yards or so nearer the house than Ellis's, and it was easy to get in line with it and the adventurer's plane. As we ran I could hear Ellis's motor kick over—the Dougal had a self-starter, as all modern ships have, and I knew he was in his cockpit at work. Chatfield was doubtless bound in the back seat.

It seemed as though every detail of the big stranger's plan was now as obvious to me as it had heretofore been a mystery. Of course, anything in the world more deceiving than a ladder is hard for me to see through. Ellis had had a hunch at the start that Tex and I didn't believe him thoroughly enough to just let him take off with Chatfield, and he'd arranged that poker game to throw us off the track. Thought it wuld make us believe him not only square, but more than that—generous, and set him in solid with us. If our side had won, he'd doubtless have double-crossed us some way. When he saw that we were losing, he'd taken a daring chance—but never, in his wildest dreams, had he thought of anything but collecting that whole six thousand for himself.

Which made it seem as though the story of Jameson and his underlings about what had happened back in the mountains seem considerably closer to the truth than the slices of syntax put out by Ellis—and which I, at least, had swallowed whole.

The moon was not in view, being behind several acres of clouds, but through little breaks in the mist enough of its light dribbled through to give us some slight idea of where our ship was. I had no idea what was in MacDowell's mind, but I did know he was always full of strategems and methods to cover any circumstances.

We ran low, and there were no more shots. In a few seconds we stumbled to the ship, and a couple of feels made it certain that Ellis hadn't lied about what he'd done to our D. H. Each elevator looked as though one of my feet had gone through it, and one of my feet, carelessly placed, could crush a dirigible like an eggshell.

ELLIS, apparently, was keeping a lookout close by his ship, but had missed us. There were no shots, but as Tex climbed in the front cockpit the other motor sprang into life.

"Swing her, Slim!" barked Tex, a half-laugh in his voice. "She's off!"

I did as he primed it, and then he clicked on the switch. Ellis was warming his motor a bit before that takeoff into the blackness with nothing but water ahead. I had to swing the prop three times, but finally the motor caught—and I'll bet Ellis would rather have heard the roars of the hounds of hell on his trail. But he must have been puzzled, at that. Probably thought we hadn't believed what he'd said. He should have been puzzled. I was.

As I dashed around the ship, Ellis came roaring by in his ship. There was only one way to make that takeoff—that was to get up by the house, turn, and give her the gun going downhill. With the grade and the length of the field that way a takeoff was not hard—but any other way was impossible for any ship.

Tex got under way the second I was in the cockpit. I had no idea what was coming. Our machine-gun was useless on the ground, angling upward with the line of the ship. It couldn't be shot without the motor going to run the tripping gear, and if one of us had held up the tail of the ship high enough to aim the gun the prop would have been splintered on the ground. Our elevators were smashed, and we couldn't take off.

Then the explanation of what that —— in the front seat was up to hit me, and I gripped the cowling with both hands.

Ellis was swinging his ship for the takeoff now, his exhausts outlining his position and course perfectly. Not a sign of life from the house. Tex swung to the right as he went up the field, and then gave the D. H. full left rudder as Ellis started down the hill in a mad rush.

Further and further Tex turned, until we, too were going down hill, but on a diagonal course which would intercept Ellis' trail. The Liberty was roaring wide open now, and soon it would be hard to hold it on the ground.

I loosened up my muscles for the crash. It looked to me as though Tex was going to ram right into them, head on. Our prop would make Hamburg steak out of them both.

But he didn't. At the last second, when it was plain that we could have cut squarely through them, Tex showed where he got his flying reputation. He swerved to the right the least little bit—and our wheels crashed through the Dougal's tailsurfaces like a cannonball through a plate-glass window.

I looked around as Tex cut the gun and tried to save us from running into a clump of trees on the edge of the water. The Dougal was turning somersaults down the field to the accompaniment of tearing linen and splintering prop and various and divers other noises.

We were out and on the run in two seconds less than nothing, but not in time. No sooner had the Dougal nestled in a heap on the ground than a dark figure was sprinting toward the narrowest section of floodwater.

There was no use of following. For a moment he was outlined against the glint of the water. Then:

"Nice work, boys! So long!"

It was still booming through the night as his body hit the slimy water. How he navigated through the mess of wreckage, and whether he ever reached the other side or not, I don't know. But there went Happy Hal Ellis, anyway, and whether he went to —— or China I don't know.

Chatfield was unconscious, but not badly hurt. Gaunt, dirty, ragged, his seamed face like a grotesque mask of turbulent iniquity —he looked the bloodthirsty mountain killer he was.

We held converse at considerable length with the trio we had met first, and by then we were fitted to listen with some intelligence. Jameson did most of the talking, and his windup was:

"What Ellis said ain't true. A hundred men araound here c'n vouch fur me. Luke here does make a little moonshine, and Moe peddles it, but that's all, and we ain't no crooks. And, as I told ye, Ellis would o' left us there in the mountains whilst he carried Zeke away. We was scared o' him comin' back, and by —— I'd 'a' shot 'im like a rat myself, and I'm a peaceable man, livin' here on my farm."

"Why didn't you speak up in meeting more when Ellis was telling all about it here in the kitchen when he first got in?"

"Whut was the use?" Luke burst forth. "You'd 'a' believed him and he could make anybody believe anything anyway. You was against us because we treated yuh rough when yuh come hyar—nothin' t' do but shut up fur us."

His ham-like fist clenched and his dark eyes grew red and stormy.

"How I'd like fur t' meet up with him in a fair fight!" he brooded.

Jameson sort of coughed apologetically, and gazed at the other two, and then at us.

"O' course," he said hesitantly, "mebbe you boys ought t' have a share in the reward—"

"I don't want any part of it!" I announced, being somewhat fed up with the whole business. "I guess you deserve it—but wait a minute!" I broke off as a sudden thought hit me. "If we get into any trouble over our long stay here, and get fined by the Army or anything like that, we'll expect you to pay for it!"

Jameson nodded. He still had something laying heavily on his gizzard, apparently, which he wanted to get off. Finally it came out.

"You boy've been pretty white," he said finally. "So we might's well tell ye. Them there cards we played with was mine—and the aces and kings and queens was marked! I done it myself when he was eatin' supper that first night! I figgered I had a right to, playin' against Ellis fur somethin' that was already ours!"

Well, gents, my nerves gave way, and my constitutional weakness asserted itself. So did MacDowell's. We laughed until we were sick, and those three grinned like Cheshire cats. The marks were so tiny I could scarcely see 'em even when pointed out to me, and Jameson, it seemed, had worn very powerful glasses to see them with. All three had used the knowledge when dealing, and had tipped off the other two. No wonder we'd lost!

THREE days later, after having procured parts from Lieutenant Railroad Brown at the reserve field in Louisville, we were in Daysville. We told the C. O. our motor had cut out and where we'd landed. We carelessly forgot to mention that the motor had cut in again before we landed, but my memory has always been weak and I'm no hero, as I mentioned before.

I often wonder where that shameless, friendless, unmoral —— Ellis is, whether teaching flying to the heathen Chinee or feeding fishes at the bottom of the old Ohoho River. You've got to hand him credit for having the courage of his convictions, at that, and letting no effete considerations like honor or squareness hold him back from the course he's set himself.

Possibly there'll come a time when I'm not consistently, completely and humiliatingly fooled in one of these shindigs. As I told Tex—

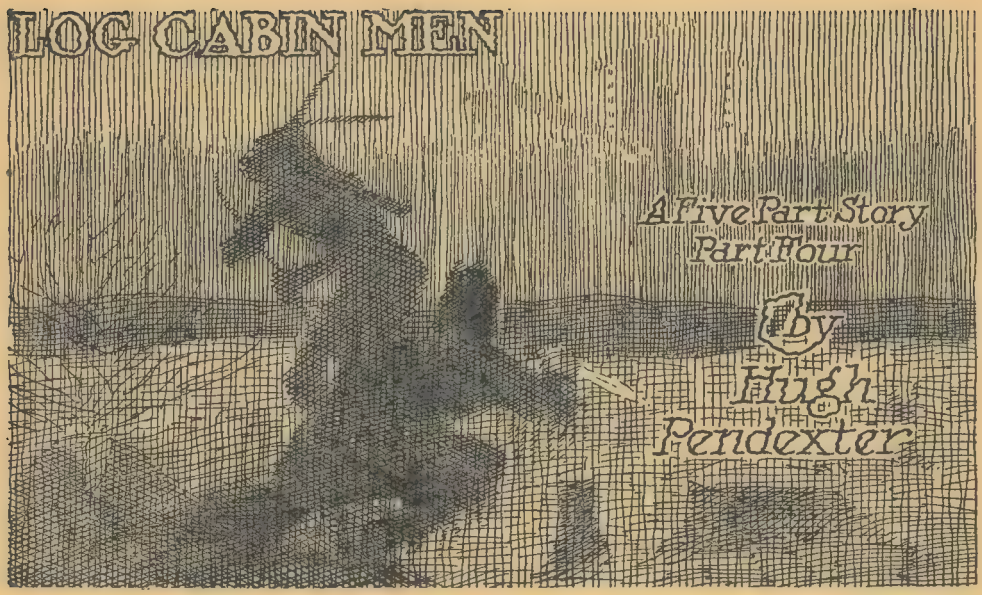
"We were dumb, but we had a better time than we would've had if we'd been smart."

"Sure," he drawled. "I had a right good week-end. It don't take much to amuse a couple of nuts, does it?"

It doesn't, at that. About all you can hand us is that we finally got to where we were supposed to go despite trying our ——est to remain elsewhere. Of course we told the boys how good we were, but we knew we'd been two spots in a deck manipulated by everybody but us.

To which the natural rejoinder is—

"Well, what of it?"




*Author of "The Border Breed," "The Homesteaders," etc.*

***The first part of the story briefly retold in story form***

ALTHOUGH the treaty of Utrecht brought comparative peace in the Old World, reflecting thereby on conditions in America, there still remained the question of the boundary line between Canada and the English colonies.

So, twenty years later, in 1744, when the French king declared war on George of England, this adamant period in the New World was likewise brought to a close.

The French in Canada held an uncanny power over the Indians, and were able to employ them, despite their long friendship with the colonies, against the English settlers south of the St. Lawrence river. Governor Shirley of Massachusetts was the outstanding figure of the day in his endeavor to lead the colonists against Quebec.

The settlers of North Yarmouth in the district of Maine were among the first to feel the treachery of their erstwhile friendly redskins.

Living in log cabins, seeking out a meager living of corn from their stumpy clearings, the settlers were on the verge of starvation. They dared not go into the forests to hunt or on to the rivers to fish for fear of Indian ambushes.

The white settlers had lived so long without being seriously molested that the generation, old enough to fight, had lost the knack of guerilla warfare. Almost daily around North Yarmouth a colonist was tricked and tomahawked while at work within calling distance of his cabin, or else was taken prisoner and sent to Canada.

Joshua Dresser, a veteran of Anne's and William's wars in England, and Philip Burnham, a scout on Governor Shirley's business, were the first to meet in the Yarmouth settlement that agreed that the old mode of fighting would have to be revived—that the Indians would have to be met with their own game.

They talked long hours of old wars and old times, and Dresser expressed a desire to return to Massachusetts with Burnham, to join Shirley's expedition against the French in Quebec.

Burnham replied—

"I'd suspect you must have been a mighty good fighting man in your day."

Dresser was indignant.

"In my day?" he cried. "I'm in my day now. I can l'arn you something about woods fighting."

This led to a small scouting expedition near the settlement, Dresser carrying a scythe.

"What are you going to do with the scythe, grandad?" Burnham asked laughingly.

"Cut the redskins' heads off," he replied.

And he did—killing several Indians on the trip, while Burnham killed none.

"Guess you'll do," remarked Burnham without a smile as he took leave of the settlement.

The two men set out for Massachusetts. Before they reached the next settlement they saved from an Indian attack Nahum Jessraday and a woman, who had been for corn at the nearest mill.

Jessraday, admiring the method of fighting of the rescuers, asked to join them.

As they walked along Jessraday amused them by telling of a dream he had twice a year—a dream of an Indian on horseback with coins in his eyes, who was always attempting to kill him. In each dream, he claimed, the Indian came nearer to him. When he should dream that the coins fell from the redskin's eyes, then he said he knew he should be killed.

During the day they put another band of Indians to rout, killing several of them. That night, as they attempted to gain shelter in an old settler's cabin, they were attacked by another band of redskins. After a stiff fight they gained the cabin, but instead of finding old Ezra Pringle, they found an Indian

*"Log Cabin Men," copyright, 1926, by Hugh Pendexter*

dressed in the old man's clothes. Pringle was found tomahawked in his bed, but no trace was found of his niece who lived with him.

Just as they thought the redskins had run away in defeat a piece of bark fell on Burnham's hand. He whispered—

"One's on the roof."

THIS discovery was the forerunner of another attack. Being unable to gain the cabin through the white men's rifle fire, the redskins shot burning fagots at the building until it caught fire.

The men inside despaired.

"We'll go out." said Burnham. "We'll make them kill us fighting."

The smoke and fire was becoming intense. The men opened the door, and before them was a strange sight.

The Indians were scattering like frightened sheep, and from the forest on the other side of the clearing came unholy sounds, like the howling of demons.

A girl came into the clearing playing the bagpipes.

"It's Pringle's niece. She has been hiding in the woods," said Jessraday.

The girl, Hoped-For Robson, was dazed in her fright, but was soon comforted, and was persuaded to join the three scouts as far as Albany.

They camped in the woods that night and reached Rochester before noon the next day. On the second day they reached Fort Massachusetts, and Burnham placed Hoped-For in the care of his sister, Nancy Wilks. Nancy saw matrimonial advantages for her brother and Hoped-For, but Burnham laughed at the idea, saying—

"She's just a child."

Leaving the girl at the fort, the three men finished the journey to Albany. Arrived there, Burnham chanced to be in a gunsmith's shop when a man came in and muttered in Dutch—

"*Von iiber bringer hab ein stück silber.*"

Later in the day, when talking to Col. William Johnson, Burnham told what he had overheard.

"That makes a double purpose for your trip," Johnson exclaimed. "Besides scouting above Saratoga to see what the French are up to, keep your eyes open for men smuggling guns. That man in the smith's shop was Stirick, a smuggler. If you find the guns and can't bring them back, destroy them. I'll send Gingego, a Mohawk war-chief, with you."

As they were talking, shots were fired, and a man cried—

"I've been robbed by John Boyce, counterfeiter of Rhode Island bills."

The shooting was aimed at three men, apparently involved in smuggling the guns, but they all escaped across the river.

Gingego and Burnham started out after them. They soon arrived at Half Moon where they found an invalid white man, an escaped prisoner from the French. Burnham identified him as the lost man, Gorton, from North Yarmouth. Gorton was reassured of a rescue, and in turn gave information about the trail of the gun smugglers.

STIRICK, the smuggler and his hirelings, Ben Tugg, Boyce, the Leveler and Till, fully believed they had shaken their followers and, on the third night, settled themselves comfortably for a drinking bout until they should be met by the Frenchman, LeBlanc, who would take the smuggled guns from them.

They had not long to wait. LeBlanc, accompanied by two Indians, arrived while they were in the midst of drinking and arguing as to whether they would be paid for their services in paper money or gold. One of the Indians had no sooner surveyed the scene than he announced that the place smelled of blood and that he feared for their safety.

LeBlanc tried to allay his fears by producing a keg of rum. The drinking proceeded, and as the high peak was reached, LeBlanc announced:

"I bring rare news, Monsieur Boyce. What will you say when I tell you Monsieur Rigaud deVaudreuil is at Fort St. Frederic with a large war-party? Such a blow he will strike the English!"

This, with the confusing influence of the rum, led to arguments, whispered words between LeBlanc and Stirick.

And again Two Deaths, the Indian, said—

"I smell blood."

"And well you should," replied LeBlanc. "Monsieur Rigaud is near this place now with a vast army of men. We will settle for the guns now."

Came the settlement, LeBlanc obviously getting the better of the deal. There were more words, all hostile and snarling, and the tension grew. Tugg was so drunk that nothing but a fight would satisfy him.

"We'll be going now!" said Boyce, sensing trouble.

And before the words were out of his mouth, Tugg's broken sword was through the neck of the Indian. A pandemonium of cries broke loose. Stirick, the Indians and LeBlanc were killed; others disappeared into the woods.

As the fighting died down, Tugg heard a noise from the river and instantly took it for the French army.

Burnham and Gingego bounded into the firelight.

Burnham charged:

"You're Boyce, the counterfeiter!"

"No, I'm Boyce, the Leveler. When things get rough, I level them out."

Burnham announced that the French army was close behind and that no time was to be lost in beating them to the fort. So Tugg, Boyce and Till hastily climbed into canoes and started with Burnham and Gingego for the fort. All night and the next day they traveled by land and water, and arrived at the stockade barely before the French and Indian advance scouts arrived on the surrounding hills.

At the fort he found his sister and Hoped-For, and all his persuasive talk could not induce Nancy to leave the fort and her invalid husband. His information regarding the oncoming French and Indian armies aroused Sergeant Hawks, in command of the fort, to exclaim:

"The women and children must be gotten away. They can be hidden in the woods until the worst of the attack is over or can start for the nearest settlement."

But inasmuch as Nancy refused to leave, Hoped-For also refused.

There were several false alarms of the attack, but none of the enemy actually left the woods to approach the fort till toward twilight. Hoped-For, during the afternoon, played on her bagpipes, stirring the men in the fort to thoughts of bravery in battle and starting a shudder of fear in the Indians in the hills above the fort.

Once when the Indians appeared in the clearing,

actually bent on attacking, Ben Tugg climbed to the top of the stockade with a knife in his mouth and, standing on the top, ran the knife around his false wig, then pulled it off, showing a head daubed with bright red paint. The Indians fled to the woods in terror, thinking he had scalped himself, and still lived. This was a drawback for the French, and at dusk there was no marked sign of attack. But off in the woods the screams of an Indian war-dance predicted all the horror of the impending trouble.

AT NINE o'clock the yelling and screaming abruptly ceased. Several of the defenders braced themselves, positive the attack was coming. Hawks endeavored to dispel this belief and urged them to retire to the cabins. While he was talking the entire red force joined in a ferocious war-whoop. Men ran to the gate and others to the firing-stages.

"They're saying good-night," cried Hawks.

Yet the men remained alert to repel an attack. The man in the tower announced he could see nothing. The men, with heads above the ramparts, could neither see nor hear the enemy. An Indian north of the fort called out loudly. The cry was caught up and repeated, and continued to be sounded until it had encompassed the fort.

Hawks dubiously remarked—

"Their sentinels are posted pretty thick, Burnham."

"They're planning to stop any messenger trying to get to Albany or Deerfield. Those are the roads they are guarding. Yet I'd start for Deerfield in a second if I wasn't convinced it would be all over before I could return."

"One way or the other, it will be all over," sighed Hawks.

Now the sound of many axes came through the darkness. Jessraday explained to Dresser—

"They're cutting small trees so they can scale the walls in the morning."

"If they'll only wait till there's enough light for me to see their heads!" exclaimed Dresser. "I'll run along the walls and mow off their heads as fast as they show."

Burnham touched his arm and whispered:

"Come to the west wall and hold a rope. I'm going out. After I've slid to the ground you must draw up the rope and remain there, ready to throw it to me when I come back."

"Jessraday will hold it for the two of us. I'm going with you," promptly declared Dresser.

"You can talk the most foolishest, Dresser, of any man I ever see," said Jessraday. "This night's work will be desperate work, and it calls for a younger man than you. I'll go with Burnham. I'm protected by my dream. You're a scythe fighter. You have to have light to see to work by. You—"

"Old? Foolish? Have you lost your wits?" angrily began Dresser.

"Both of you hush," broke in Burnham. "If Tugg hears you he'll insist on going. I'm not hunting for a fight. I'm after powder. I go alone. That's the end of it."

Grumbling and complaining, they accompanied him to the western rampart where he already had left a coil of rope. He quickly gained the top of the rampart and caught the end of the rope as Dresser tossed it. Taking care to make no noise, he slowly fed the rope to the ground.

"Hold tight!" he whispered. "I'm going. Good-by."

He was over the wall and slowly descending.

When his feet touched the ground he sank to a sitting posture and retained his hold on the rope while he listened. For five minutes he waited to make sure no red sentinel was stalking him. From the campfires came the wild songs of dancing warriors but he could hear no sounds in the clearing. He gave the rope a jerk and released it and proceeded to crawl among the stumps and logs toward the fires.

Depending entirely on the sense of touch, except as the fires marked the general direction he purposed taking, he felt his way around the obstacles. He was half way through the clearing when he froze alongside a log and waited to identify a slight noise ahead. It was repeated, a light step in the litter of dead branches and twigs that was left after the trees were cut to form the ramparts. One of the campfires was blotted out for a moment, and he knew a man had passed between him and it and was quite close. Without making a sound, he rose to his hands and knees. A faint scuffling step just in front of him prompted him to assume a crouching posture, resting on one knee and foot, with his knife gripped in his right hand while his left was half

raised to ward off a blow. He held his breath and waited.

The sentinel was moving as stealthily as a wildcat, but this was from inborn caution and not because the man believed an enemy was near. Staring upward, Burnham now could discern the figure of the man, a dark blotch against a scarcely less dark sky. Drawing back his right arm and extending his left, Burnham stood half erect.

Some subtle sense warned the Indian he was in danger. He grunted under his breath and took a quick step forward. Burnham sprang forward, lunging with the knife and darting his left hand to where the red throat should be. His hand clutched at a painted face instead of a throat and the mouth was open under his palm. With a gurgling sound the Indian fell toward him, but made no defense. Dropping the knife, which had been buried to the hilt, Burnham caught the body and prevented it from falling. The thrust in the darkness had sent the blade through the heart and the man had died on his feet. He had opened his mouth to sound his death-cry or warning, but was dead even as the muscles were trying to carry out the last command. What was a ferocious engine of war became senseless matter in a tenth of a second.

Lowering his victim gently to the ground, Burnham sank on his heels and trembled slightly from nervous reaction. Then he searched for the powder horn while listening for further ominous sounds. Only the yelling and whooping of the dancers in the two camps disturbed the quiet. The savage had no powder horn. Over his shoulder was an unstrung bow and a quiver half filled with arrows. Burnham took these and bent the bow and renewed his advance to the timber.

Burnham had decided to approach the western camp, as it was near a swamp and more compact than the other. He suddenly missed the sound of the axes.

He was halted twice in his slow journey across the clearing by sentinels calling to each other. He shifted his course so as to enter the timber north of the camp, and as he worked into this, he was relieved to find it empty. With the exception of the men strung around the fort, all the enemy were at the two camps, eating and dancing.

As he crept through the timber he began to catch the lively chatter of the Canadians. He began to fear his venture was useless and to wish he had tried the other camp where the fires were farther apart. Continuing toward the light, he all but tripped where the forest floor should have been clear. He investigated and found a small heap of fagots. He cast about and found similar heaps. Instead of cutting small trees to be used as scaling ladders, the enemy had prepared much fuel for burning the ramparts.

A wild cry in the clearing brought him to a halt. He did not understand its significance until it was caught up and repeated and a Frenchman shouted—

"A man has left the fort and killed one of our Indians!"

Another Frenchman sharply ordered:

"Spread out and block the road to Albany. Doty, run to the other camp and have them close the road to Deerfield."

Canadians came running north through the growth. Burnham leaned against a tree to allow them to pass. These men were talking and complaining because they had not eaten.

"It's an Indian that's been fool enough to get killed. Let his friends block the roads," said one.

The last to pass, three men, brushed by Burnham's tree. One said he must go to the clearing. His companions left him to reach the road below the fort. Burnham glided after the man and had followed him almost to the clearing when an Indian hailed. The Canadian replied in the Mohawk dialect and told him to hasten to the road. Burnham took up his pursuit and collided with a stump.

The Canadian halted and, in Mohawk, remarked:

"Why do you not go to the road? A man has escaped from the fort to get help from Albany or Deerfield."

"The Indian is in the road by this time," grumbled Burnham in French. He hurried forward as he spoke.

From the left a Canadian cried:

"The Indians are covering the road. We can go back to the kettles, Raoul."

"And hurry, slow one, or you'll go to sleep hungry," added a second voice.

"The three of us were the last to leave the camp. I am here. Two are there. Who are you, m'sieur?" asked the Frenchman as Burnham came up to him.

BURNHAM struck him down with the flat of his ax. He kneeled long enough beside the insensible body to find the powder horn, wrench it loose and tuck it inside his hunting shirt. Then walking boldly, he entered the clearing. He had covered half the distance to the wall when two savages blocked his advance. He could barely make them out, although they were within a few feet of him.

"Go to the road," he told them in French.

He repeated the order in the Mohawk tongue.

Entirely unsuspicious, they glided away. Burnham lowered his ax and belted his knife and pressed on. By keeping his back to the central campfire he knew he should arrive near the spot where his friends were waiting to throw him the rope.

"A man will shoot you," warned a red scout at one side.

"It is dark. They can see nothing," he replied, walking as rapidly as he could among the stumps.

A gun crashed from the rampart and a bullet whistled unpleasantly close.

"Come back, Frenchman," advised the red scout, and three of the Indians in the clearing fired their guns at the wall.

Moving quietly, he made for the rampart. The moment his groping hands rested on the rough surface he sharply called—

"The rope, Dresser!"

The rope promptly fell, but some twelve feet to his left. He worked toward it, one hand brushing the wall, the other holding a knife.

The Indians had heard him speak in English and were very suspicious. One cried—

"Where are you, Frenchman?"

Receiving no reply, the three rapidly worked forward. Burnham heard them as his fingers came in contact with the rope. With a leap he went up hand over hand and threw himself stride of the rampart.

"Good land! I feared the dead rider had turned his eyes on you," huskily exclaimed Jessraday.

"One of you nearly shot me," growled Burnham as he pulled the bow from his back and began discharging arrows toward where he believed the three Indians to be. He shot at random, sowing the long shafts in a row until the quiver was emptied. A volley of arrows where they had expected bullets alarmed the savages, and they retreated precipitately, making much noise. Dresser would have wasted a bullet had not Burnham insisted he hold his fire. Dropping the bow and quiver, he told them to keep watch. He hastened along the north wall until he came upon Hawks, recognizing him by his voice.

"I'm back. Quick trip," greeted Burnham.

Hawks found his hand and shook it warmly.

"And I'm mighty glad. We gave you up when we heard the Indians howling."

"They found the man I killed on going out," Burnham explained. Then drawing the sergeant aside, he whispered, "They've cut lots of dry wood. They plan to burn the walls tomorrow."

"If we had plenty of powder I'd love to have them try that. We have less than four pounds and two pounds of lead. But so long as the powder lasts they will have brisk work in bringing firewood against these walls."

"They will run no risks. They will dig trenches and push the wood ahead. We'll see nothing to shoot at."

"Then they'll take us," muttered Hawks.

"Here's one horn I took from a Frenchman. I could have killed him. But he mistook me for a friend, and I was afraid of the morning."

"You should have killed him," gritted Hawks. "Get some sleep. I must see that all the tubs and buckets are filled. But only God can stop them from burning us out if they dig trenches."

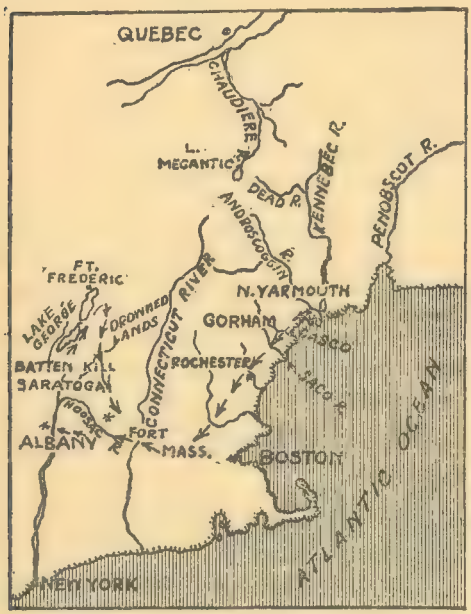
Burnham glanced up at the dark sky and encouraged:

"There's rain in the air. They can't open trenches after it gets light. They'll not attack tonight. They think a messenger broke through their lines and is now making for Albany or Deerfield. Let us all sleep. Two men to each wall is enough."

Hawks rapidly made the rounds and posted sentinels. Parson Norton was left in charge of these. When he entered his cabin to get a few hours' sleep he heard the welcome patter of rain on the roof. Occasionally through the night the Indians made a hideous uproar, but the exhausted defenders slept on.

At daybreak the enemy renewed their heavy gun-fire. Hawks ordered the men not to shoot unless sure of killing, and not even then unless it was to stop a foe from

gaining the walls. The rain had spoiled Rigaud's scheme for firing the ramparts, and he opened no trenches. The garrison capable of bearing arms consisted of eight militiamen, Parson Norton and the three




men from New England. Surrounding the fort were seven hundred red and white fighting men.

Nancy Wilks, when not waiting on the sick and wounded, raged up and down the parade, swinging her ax. The Robson girl remained in a cabin with the women and children. Tugg, perched on the rampart removed his wig and bowed his bald head in salute to a bullet whistling close, and shouted down to Burnham—

"If we had half a dozen more stout lads and a keg of powder they'd send over to France for an army to come and help them."

"Get down, you fool! You'll be killed!"

"Gently and softly, my roaring boy."

And he grinned and pulled his knife and went through the pantomime of cutting off his ears and then turned his head so the nearest savages could observe the mutilations. The Indians refused to fire at him. Word was passed among them that he not only scalped himself but also cut off his own ears. Although he did not know it, his reputation was now established as a very strong medicine-man. He dropped to the ground and commenced singing an old pirate song.

"Why don't they git down to work?" complained Dresser as he busily whetted the blade of the scythe to a fine edge.

The circle of fire incessantly raked the top of the ramparts, but the savages showed no disposition to make a general assault. Thomas Knowlton was on duty in the watch-tower, but had nothing to report. He leaned against the stout wall, shoulder high, and wondered when the end would come. Hawks, continually on the move to prevent any waste of the precious powder, requested Burnham to gain the tower and warn Knowlton to keep covered.

Burnham ascended to the platform and urged:

"Keep down, man. You'll be hit."

"They're sending all their lead against the walls," replied Knowlton without shifting his position. "We was fools not to lay in a stock of bows and a big stock of arrers. We could do a lot of damage with arrers if they'd try to climb the walls. Wonder how long this is going to last?"

"Unless a miracle happens they'll be inside before sundown. They can finish it any minute they're willing to swap a few lives for the victory. Sit down. There's nothing for you to see. Bows and arrows would come in good, but it's too late to think of that. Sergeant Hawks orders for you to keep under cover."

Knowlton did not seem to hear him. He glanced at the sun and remarked:

"It's nearly midday. If it wasn't for the women and children it wouldn't be so horrible. John Smead's wife is near her time."

Burnham shuddered. Once the fort was taken, the savages would not delay the return to Canada because of a sick woman and her new-born babe. He was filled with a terrible rage as he realized his helplessness. If a man could make the supreme sacrifice and thereby save the weak and helpless, it would be so much easier.

Knowlton continued:

"I pity John Smead more'n any one in this fort. If he's unfortunate enough to live, I pity him more'n any person in the world. Any sort of death is kinder than what he'll have to see and always remember."

"——!" gasped Burnham, wiping the sweat from his face, "I'll die before I'll see that."

Knowlton nodded his head oddly and leaned more heavily against the wall and rested his head on the top timber. Burnham's eyes widened with dread.

"Knowlton!" he sharply cried. "Get back! Knowlton, what's the matter with you?"

And bending low, he advanced toward the silent figure. Knowlton's body lost its balance and he fell in crumpled heap before Burnham could reach him. He was shot through the head.

Burnham cautiously peered out and saw several savages rapidly crawling from the clearing to the timber. He raised his gun, but the Indians already were entering the growth. And he remembered Hawks' orders to save the powder. Moving back and securing Knowlton's powder horn, he descended and informed Hawks of their loss.

"Say nothing to the others. It's the beginning of the end. Our powder is nearly gone. We'll post no more men in the tower unless to fight fire-arrows."

KNOWLTON'S death was soon known, however. It was Nancy Wilks who saw the blood dropping from the tower. She started to investigate but Hawks halted her and briefly said:

"Don't go up. Knowlton's been killed."

The yelling and shouting increased in volume. Every man believed an assault in force was to be made on all four walls at once, and each grimly braced himself for the last stand. Burnham fished out his whetstone and resumed sharpening the long blade. As he was testing it with his thumb, the firing and howling abruptly ceased. Tugg waved his wig and cutlas and howled:

"All stout lads on deck to turn back boarders! 'Each man to his gun, for the work must be done.' Frog-eaters! Injun-lovers!"

Nancy Wilks came running to the gate, and grimly cried:

"Now, please God, we'll have our chance! They're charging! Handgrips at last!"

Jessraday from the firing-stage loudly shouted:

"A flag! A white flag! An Injun fetching a white flag!"

"The cowardly scum are surrendering!" roared Tugg.

Hawks scrambled up and looked over a wall. A tall savage, freshly painted, was coming through the clearing with a flag of truce. A short distance behind him walked three Frenchmen. None carried arms. Burnham joined Hawks and informed—

"The man with his arm in a sling is Rigaud."

Hawks called out for his men to hold their fire. The enemy had ceased firing. The Indian advanced to within a few rods of the gate and halted and waved the flag. Hawks quit the wall and commanded—

"Watch the woods, but don't fire as long as they keep the truce."

He hastened to the gate and told Parson Norton and Burnham to put aside their weapons and accompany him.

The gate was opened and three went out. The Frenchmen advanced beyond the Indian. Rigaud bowed and gave his name and rank, presented his two companions as Messieurs Montigny and D'Auteuil and asked who was in command of the fort.

Burnham interpreted for Hawks and gave the desired information. Rigaud then said:

"You are out of powder. Your guns have been quiet for a long time. You are very few. There are more than seven hundred men behind me in the woods. Surrender and we will give you good quarter. Refuse and we shall make a general assault. If that is necessary, then I'll not answer for my Indians."

"What do you mean by good quarter?" asked Hawks.

"Your lives shall be spared. You will be taken to Quebec or Montreal. You will be exchanged through Albany or Boston."

"You have lost several savages. They will massacre some of our people," said Hawks.

"I control my Indians, Monsieur le commandant, except they capture a fort by attacking in force. None of the prisoners will be given to the Indians."

"I am not doubting your sincerity, but Frenchmen sometimes have promised more than they could carry out," said Hawks. "If your savages do not scalp us, how will they be paid for coming here?"

"My red children know a prisoner is worth twice the bounty for a scalp," explained Rigaud. "When I tell them, they shall receive the price of a prisoner they will be satisfied." Then, haughtily, "But I do not have to offer you terms, monsieur. I have but to wave my hand and you are all dead or prisoners."

"That may be, but we would take a lot of your red —— with us," replied Hawks. "We prefer to be killed defending the fort than to surrender and see some of our number put to the torture."

"I wish to prevent useless bloodshed. I give you this chance. You will all be taken to Canada."

"One of our women is near childbirth."

"There is a surgeon with us. She will receive better care from us than you could give her."

Hawks was silent for a few moments, then replied:

"This is something to be talked over. It is something for my people to decide."

"I will wait two hours for my answer, monsieur. Then I shall attack. I can control my Indians if you surrender. If you persist in fighting and there be any survivors, there is no white man in North America who can control my red children."

On his own account Burnham said—

"They will demand prisoners to torture to cover the bones of their dead."

"They will know their dead will be covered with gifts once they get back to Fort St. Frederic, monsieur. I Rigaud de Vaudreuil, in the presence of these two officers promise that. All shall be held for exchange. None shall be harmed."

Burnham repeated this to Hawks, who said—

"In two hours you will receive our answer."

With ceremonious bows the parley was ended. The Frenchmen returned under their flag to the woods. Once inside the gate, with a man posted on the wall to guard against a surprize attack, Hawks called for all to join in the conference. All the sick men, except Josiah Reed who was very ill, and the women and children gathered around him. He repeated the Frenchmen's demands and promises.

"If we was sure we'd be took to Canada that would be better than being killed," said one woman.

"Fight the —— back on to their own ship and then fight them into the sea!" cried Tugg.

For the *fleur-de-lis* on his chest and his cropped ears were aching hideously at the thought of a third period of captivity among the French.

Parson Norton called for silence, and kneeled and prayed, seeking guidance. Then Hawks requested all be silent until called on to speak. He asked Norton to express his opinion. The parson promptly replied:

"If we were all in health or if the sick and the women and children were safe away, I'd say to stand it out to the last. But if they take this place by assault, there will be mighty few prisoners live to see Canada."

"John Smead, I told the French commander of your wife's condition. He promises she shall have the attendance of his surgeon and that she and the child shall be cared for. What do you say?"

"If I could be sure of that, I'd gladly agree for them to burn me," cried Smead. "Burnham, you've been among 'em. What do you think?"

"I believe your wife and babe will be well cared for. There is only one point I am in doubt about. Rigaud says none of us shall be given to the Indians. I do not believe he can keep that promise."

"Meaning some of us must be tortured!" exclaimed Moses Scott.

"That doesn't follow. They may kill one or two and hold the others for ransom. Or they may hold all for ransom. They've learned they can buy more with the price of a prisoner than they can with the price of a scalp."

Others in turn spoke. Butchery was assured if they refused. Some would reach Canada, and among these undoubtedly would be the women and children. As the whole situation revolved around the women and children, it was finally voted to accept the Frenchman's terms. Nancy Wilks threw aside her ax in disgust, but offered no objections, as she was thinking of her husband and the women. Had she been in the fort alone, she would have elected to fight it out. So would Tugg, Dresser and Burnham. Jessraday was optimistic, and whispered to Burnham that his dream covered all, that none would come to harm until the dead rider shook the coins from his eyes. Before the two hours expired Hawks opened the gate and waved a white cloth.

Rigaud, Montigny and D'Auteuil came across the clearing.

"You have decided to accept our terms?" asked Rigaud.

"On your promise as a French officer and a gentleman that none of us shall be given to the savages, that all shall be taken safely

to Canada, that we shall be treated humanely and exchanged at the first opportunity, we will accept your terms," Hawks answered through Burnham.

"These gentlemen hear me promise that for the second time," said Rigaud. "We will now enter and raise his Majesty's flag, and arrange for an immediate departure. Neither the Indians nor the Canadians will enter until we are ready to march."

He turned and signaled with the flag. The elder DeMuy, who had overtaken the army almost before it was clear of the Drowned Lands, and Sieurs de la Valterie and de Sabrevois came through the clearing and were told the fort had surrendered and that only the officers would enter for the present.

The group passed inside and the gate was promptly barred. One of the officers raised the French flag over the wall. A thunder of cheers and crashing volleys of musketry greeted the flag. Indians and Canadians began streaming from the woods.

Tugg whispered to Burnham—

"Clap these —— under hatches and hold them for ransom!"

"Silence!" sternly commanded Burnham. "Do you want to get us all killed?" Then sorrowfully, "I'd thought the same thing, but it won't do, Tugg. It won't do."

THE Canadians did not come quite to the fort, but the Indians swarmed in a wildly screaming mob up to the ramparts. The men glared uneasily and glanced about for weapons. The women carried themselves well, but there was worse than the fear of death in the mind of each. Rigaud noted their alarm and assured:

"You are safe. They are noisy children, but noise won't hurt you. You have nothing to fear. Bring out your sick."

While the sick men were forming in a double line with the women ahead of them, some of the Indians near the gate dislodged some foundation stones and crawled under the rampart and threw open the gate. Then the whole howling force of savages poured inside. Rigaud called to his Canadians and ordered the prisoners to form a compact group. The officers, reinforced by the militia, formed a ring around the prisoners. Rigaud, through Doty, his interpreter, ordered the savages to retire, but his voice was one against four hundred.

An Ottawa ducked under a soldier's arm and grasped the Robson girl by the arm. The next moment he was sprawling in the arms of his crowding companions, half stunned by a terrific blow on the side of the head from the stout fist of Nancy Wilks. Yells of derision greeted the Indians' repulse. An Abnaki forced his way between two militiamen to strike John Perry with a club. Tugg blocked his path and pulled off his wig and struck him in his face with it.

With a howl, dropping his knife, the Indian leaped back. Jessraday, convinced he was protected by his dream, took his place with the Canadians and roughly pushed and shoved and hauled the Indians away.

But what doubtless saved some of the prisoners from a ferocious death was the discovery of blood dropping from the tower. Like beasts on the scent of a victim, a dozen of the pack swarmed up to the platform and dragged the corpse to the parade. They tore off the scalp and cut off the head and arms and screamed and shrieked like insane ghouls. The sickening sight and the fate it portended was a terrible shock to the helpless prisoners. Nancy Wilks, with an arm around the Robson girl, cried out:

"They can't hurt the poor, dead body any. If acting that way satisfies their spirit, then Thomas Knowlton serves us better dead than ever he could alive." To Rigaud she fiercely said, "What are you waiting for? For us all to be murdered? Take us out of this place."

Burnham repeated his sister's demand. Rigaud gave the order for the prisoners to go through the gate where the bulk of the Canadians were waiting to fall in beside them. Rigaud told Nancy:

"Madame has the heart of a lion. It is the women, not the men, who are so stubborn against France."

"I don't understand your monkey-talk. Get us out into the open," she replied.

All the prisoners filed through the gate and passed down the lane formed by the militia. Dresser was the only one to display arms. He carried the scythe, the blade now strapped to the snath, under his arm like a crutch. Some of the men walked with difficulty, and all but eleven should have been in bed. Reed was mortally ill and was helped along by two men.

Smoke swept over them, and those who glanced back saw the flames rolling from the low doorways of the cabins, and the

dark pillar rolling high into the blue sky could be seen for many miles. Naked savages leaped and danced around the blazing houses and ramparts and shrieked like demons. Rigaud was anxious to remove the prisoners to the camp west of the doomed post and clear of the fearful scene. He rejoiced that the Indians had satisfied their ferocity in part by mutilating the dead man and in firing the fort. The more they gave rein to their frenzy, the sooner they would be amenable to the loose discipline he imposed upon them.

"That was a tight rub," he confided to Montigny.

"If they hadn't found the dead man in the tower we should be taking but few prisoners away, monsieur. But the end is not yet?"

"I can hold them once I make the camp and their ardor has cooled."

"I trust so. But there are many of them. They are as fierce as wolves and as uncertain as little children."

Now the savages began straggling away from the fort, whooping and dancing and bringing what poor booty they had managed to find. The grotesque and terrible paraded side by side, a naked savage flaunting poor Knowlton's scalp at the end of a long pole and a Potawatomi wearing a coarse gown that once belonged to Nancy Wilks. It was not until the prisoners had been huddled together in the camp that Montigny's dire prophesy was fulfilled. The Indians began demanding some of the prisoners. They became so insistent and insolent that Doty hurried to the commander and told him:

"They say they must have some of the men. An Iroquois of the Lake is dead. The St. Francis chief is dead. Many of them are wounded."

Burnham repeated this to those around him. Norton indignantly cried—

"Tell the Frenchman he promised as an officer and a gentleman that none of us were to be turned over to his —— crew."

Burnham spoke to Rigaud, who was conferring with his interpreter.

"Silence! I am trying to save your life," snarled Rigaud.

And he knit his brows and scowled at the dancing circle of gesticulating faces. He saw fires gleaming in the small eyes of long-haired Ottawas, in the feral gaze of Chippewas, Abnaki and converted Mohawks who had their homes on the St. Lawrence. He slowly announced—

"No officer, woman or child shall be turned over to them."

"That is not enough, m'sieur," harshly spoke up Burnham. "You made a promise. You pledged the honor of France!"

"You'll talk yourself into a kettle. The best I can do if you do not keep silent," sullenly replied Rigaud. "No soldier shall be given them to be tortured."

"Good ——! As if you could hinder once you hand over a man to them!" passionately retorted Burnham. "They are trimming trees for fire-posts. You have an army of militia, m'sieur."

"Think I will set my two forces to fighting each other? To annihilate each other?"

"Better that every soldier and all your officers and even yourself died on this spot than that you should pledge the honor of your king and besmirch it by not making that pledge good."

"If no prisoner is harmed, my word remains unsullied," was the haughty reply. "They want ransom money. This fierce play of theirs will soon spend itself."

Doty broke in and begged Burnham to induce some of the men to declare their willingness to go with the Indians.

"You hear your interpreter, Monsieur Rigaud. He would save your honor by forcing us to surrender ourselves. It was to Monsieur Rigaud de Vaudreuil, representing his Majesty, Louis the Fifteenth, the town major of Three Rivers and commander of this expedition, we surrendered."

Rigaud realized he had promised more then he could fulfill unless he surrounded the prisoners with his army and alienated his red allies. Once word reached the other tribes, fighting for France, that four hundred Indians had returned Onontio's belts after being refused their share of prisoners, Canada's red army would shrink to a few implacable Micmacs. Rigaud stared at the terrible visages circling around barrier of militia men. He noted the eager fingers extended like hooks. He weakly announced—

"If some of you men will go willingly with the Indians, our agreement will not be violated."

"——! Are you in command or are you only a voice?" roared Burnham. "Do you deny that you promised in the presence of your officers that none of us should be given to the savages?"

"That high tone with me under any circumstances is bad, monsieur," coldly replied Rigaud. "If you were not here, my prisoners, you would all be dead or worse by this time. It would be so simple and harmless if some of you would call yourselves the Indians' prisoners. What difference does it make to you if some of you walk to Canada as Indian prisoners? Once at Fort St. Frederic they will receive the bounty for a prisoner, and their pride will be saved."

Now the savages were pressing very close, their patience exhausted. They made threatening gestures and even attempted to seize and drag a prisoner to their end of the camp. One ducked low and gained Burnham's side and knocked off his hat in grabbing at his hair, waved a short knife and screeched horribly.

Burnham promptly felled him with a blow that left him insensible. Then lifting an open hand, he loudly shouted in the Mohawk dialect:

"Onontio's son promised that no man, woman or child should be hurt if the fort was surrendered. Now you men from the Sault and the Mountain, from Detroit and Mackinac want prisoners. I will go with you. But let no man strike me unless he strikes from behind and with an ax or I will kill him with my bare hands."

A splendidly formed man, equal to Burnham in height, pushed his way between the soldiers and lightly placed a hand on Burnham's shoulder and in a sonorous voice announced:

"Gainengoton,* chief of the Sault Saint Louis band, claims this man for his prisoner. It is good a chief should claim a chief. This white man is very brave."

"I surrender myself to Red Bird, chief of the Sault Saint Louis. He is a mighty chief. My medicine tells me he would die before he would break a promise."

The borderer's boldness in felling an assailant, his courageous words in placing himself in Gainengoton's custody, aroused the savages' admiration. They laughed and jeered at the warrior now crawling to his feet. Gainengoton took a string of white and purple wampum from his neck and slipped it over Burnham's neck, and said:

"No man will hurt a prisoner wearing Gainengoton's wampum."

* Red Bird

RIGAUD was both humiliated and relieved. It would require but a few more prisoners to placate the savages. He waited hopefully for others to follow Burnham's example. Tugg advanced to Burnham's side outside the circle and removed his big wig. The crowding throng quickly gave ground on beholding what appeared to be dried blood on the shiny scalp, and the stubs of ears. In French Tugg announced:

"I will be a red man's prisoner. It is better to be a prisoner of the Indians than of the French."

Burnham rapidly translated this in Mohawk. The interpreter repeated in Ottawa and Abnaki the simple statement that the white man was willing to shift masters. Rigaud's face flushed, and he stared angrily at Tugg and remarked—

"You've been in French hands before, little cock."

"Aye, —— them! Twice before."

The Indians whooped and danced, but displayed little of homicidal lust. Doty told Burnham:

"Red Bird will protect you. They say the little man who scalps himself is strong medicine. They are afraid of him. None will claim him as a prisoner. But none will lift a hand to him. They say they must have more prisoners."

Dresser and Jessraday had listened without understanding. The pantomime between Gainengoton and Burnham was easy to read. Dresser now angrily demanded—

"What in —— is all this powwowing about?"

Burnham briefly explained. With a snort of disgust the old man announced:

"Tell the red fools I'll be their prisoner. That's better than to be held by a white man who can't keep his word."

Burnham faithfully repeated his words, even to the term of derision. The old man's frankness pleased and amused the savages. Some laughed loudly and some patted him on the shoulders. He was taken by an Abnaki, the brother of the dead Cadenaret, who fastened a medal on his shirt to show he was under a chief's protection.

"Say the same for me," said Jessraday. "Tell the Frenchman we're safer with the Injuns than with him."

The Indians were now in good humor, but insisted they must have more men or some of the women and children. Rigaud pointed

to several soldiers and indicated they were to go with the Indians. Then he turned and walked rapidly away, leaving his officers to safeguard the prisoners remaining among the militia.

One of the soldiers, terribly enraged, called after Rigaud—

"If our friends had come back from Deerfield with the powder, Mister Blow-hard, we'd seen you all in —— before we'd quit!"

Burnham tried to stop him but was too late. The telltale words were out even as Burnham clapped his hand over the man's mouth. Rigaud halted, his eyes blazing with anger. His expression changed to joy when a Canadian, who understood English, repeated the soldier's words.

He turned back, showing his teeth in a smile.

"Ho-ho," he chuckled. "That is why so few were in the fort. Some went east to the next fort. My Indians will be glad to hear that."

He told Doty to spread the news and to say that the Abnaki should have the honor of traveling to the east and waylaying Dr. Williams' force.

This diversion also lessened the savages' lust for an immediate killing. All prisoners taken would belong to the Abnaki. Rigaud would have no word to say as to their disposal. The Indians' prisoners were led to the other end of the camp. The soldiers were tied to trees in a sitting posture, but were not roughly treated. The four who had volunteered were not tied. Tugg could have walked away down the Hoosac road and no red man would have stopped him. Burnham informed him of his prestige, but warned:

"If Rigaud can get you back it will go hard with you. If he sees that scar on your chest he might send you over to France."

"I shall never go to France, my lad," said Tugg.

There was much confusion for a while as the Abnaki men busied themselves with looking after their weapons, refilling their powder horns, securing rations and painting their heads and bodies. After they had departed on their grim business, Tugg wandered about and talked with the men, and reported to Burnham that only Norton, Hawks and the women and children remained with the Canadians. The man who had blurted out the information concerning the Williams' detachment was in a state of collapse, and started to weep. Burnham dropped beside him and warned:

"Stop it! If a savage sees a tear you'll be hurried to a fire. Hold up your head!"

"Oh, my ——! To think I've sent those bloody —— after our men! I wish my tongue had been torn out before I spoke!"

"That's done and can't be helped. But if you show weakness, they'll kill you, and once they start killing there's no saying where they will stop. As to Williams and his men, they haven't been harmed yet."

There no longer appeared to be a disposition to harm the prisoners, and those who were tied to trees were allowed to eat all they wished, and their bonds were not so tight as to be uncomfortable. Burnham, free to walk about, saw Norton in company with several soldiers returning to the fort. He hailed him, and the parson halted long enough to explain that he had been given permission to write a notice and fasten it to the charred gatepost. He showed the writing to Burnham. It briefly related the facts of the siege and Rigaud's request for a parley and surrender. And it explicitly set forth Rigaud's promise that every prisoner would be exchanged for a French captive.

That night Rigaud visited the Indian camp and gave presents and promised much more once Fort St. Frederic was reached, provided all the prisoners were treated kindly.

The night passed quietly. After an early meal the sorry procession was formed. Gainengoton permitted Burnham to wander where he would. Because of the sick and wounded, poor time was made, and Burnham was constantly afraid lest some impatient savage should sink an ax in a sick man's head. Rigaud also feared this, and sent Doty to repeat the promises of presents if all the prisoners arrived safely at Fort St. Frederic. Burnham, by virtue of the chief's wampum, visited his friends guarded by the Canadians. He found his sister about to start in search of her husband, but succeeded in persuading her to keep with the white army after promising to protect Wilks. He passed on in search of Norton who, Mrs. Perry said, had been taken from the camp at an early hour. Fearing some treachery to the parson, he hurried down the road. John Aldrich, wounded in the foot and limping painfully ahead of a scowling savage, called out as a greeting:

"Good-by, Burnham. I sha'n't be with you when you make camp tonight."

Burnham halted and asked—

"What do you mean?"

Aldrich pointed to his foot and said—

"They'll never bother with me."

Ignoring the scowling savage, Burnham threw him over his shoulder and strode rapidly down the road. After a quarter of a mile he halted and stood Aldrich on his sound foot. When Aldrich's master, a Caughnawaga man, came up, his face a nightmare in white and green paint, Burnham told him:

"You are a great warrior. A great white warrior now says so. I have taken many scalps from the Kennebec to far north of Fort St. Frederic. If one great warrior can carry a brave man who has a bad foot, why can not another great warrior do the same?"

The Indian heard the question without any sign of expression on his grotesque face. After a few moments he slowly replied:

"A strong white warrior has opened a small bag filled with big talk. It is a good talk. A Caughnawaga man understands as if the words were talked into much wampum."

And turning quickly, he drew Aldrich upon his shoulders and trotted away.

Burnham continued his search for the parson, and came to Josiah Reed, lying on the ground. The man was mortally ill and could go no farther. His master stood beside him. Burnham expected to see an ax crash through the thread of life. But instead, the savage picked Reed up and carried him on his back. Within ten minutes Reed expired.

BURNHAM waited for the prisoners of the Indians to come along as he saw Norton and DeMuy sitting by the road ahead. The Canadians and their prisoners came first, and now some of the Indians were mingled with the soldiers as if they had an equity in the captives. John Perry's wife saw Burnham and shrilly called to him:

"Help John to git back. I'm played out and can't go any faster."

Two of the Indians, observing her lagging steps, ran to her and pushed her along and tapped their tomahawks.

Hawks, walking beside Rigaud, objected to the savage's troubling one of army's prisoners. Rigaud talked to the two men and explained that the woman was exhausted and that belts had been given for her safe arrival in Canada. The savages' bearing changed at once, and from then on they treated her kindly. The woman did her best, but within a few minutes stumbled and fell. Understanding that a murderous whim might possess the Indians at any moment, Burnham ran back to where John Perry was plodding along, carrying a heavy pack. To Perry's master Burnham spoke much as he had to Reed's master. The Indian, a man from the Sault Saint Louis, at once took the pack and told Perry to go and assist his wife. Burnham interpreted this, and Perry ran ahead eagerly.

Burnham fell in beside the Robson girl as she and Nancy Wilks came along, and was glad to see she was carrying her bagpipes.

"Give them some music, Hope," he suggested.

"Will they like it?"

"The Indians will. The rest don't count."

She passed her left arm over the bag and commenced playing "The Song of Black Donald." The effect on the Indians was magical. Those in the rear ran forward, hurrying the prisoners before them and, in some instances, leaving them to trail along behind. They pushed their way through the lines of militiamen to get close to the girl. Hands were stretched forward to stroke her hair, to touch her person. Rigaud, in a furious rage at the music, came running back.

"Softly and gently, Frenchman," bawled Tugg. "She can lead them against you if she will."

"It pleases your savages, m'sieur. Why should you interfere? It may save you from the disgrace of having prisoners murdered after solemnly swearing to protect them," added Burnham.

Rigaud scowled venomously at Tugg, and sullenly told Burnham:

"If it keeps them quiet I have no objections. I came to see no harm was being done."

And he turned to the front again.

The wild skirling was barbaric and elemental enough to find an instant response in the red nature. The savages crowded behind and on both sides of the small piper, and their eyes glowed as their martial spirit was excited almost to a frenzy by the fierce stimulus. The line of march became disorderly. Those prisoners capable of swift

travel had an excellent opportunity for darting into the timber unnoticed had not friendship for the helpless or marital ties held.

Doty came back and told Burnham—

"Monsieur Rigaud fears the Indians are getting too excited."

Burnham shouted—

"Something gentler, girl!"

She heard him and shifted to a wailing lament, unutterably sad in the captives' ears. As the sobbing notes poured out their poignant pathos, the savages ceased to be blood-lusting warriors, and walked with mournful mien. She ceased, and with the last strains the Indians awaked from the spell and slowly fell back.

Gainengoton told Burnham:

"War-drums were calling the people by the Eastern Door to take a long red path. My father was telling me about it. He stood by my side when the medicine-woman told about the old days before the Kaniengehaga* followed the Black Robes to Canada. My father was telling me how he killed a Cherokee chief. Then his ghost was very sad and went away when the drums stopped, and we heard Ga-oh weeping in the Great Home of the Winds. We heard an Iroquois mother whispering to her dead son. We saw a bird let loose from a bark basket over the grave of a little child. The medicine-woman made the heart of Gainengton ache."

The lines were reformed and word was passed for the long procession to travel rapidly, but John Smead's wife was scarcely able to keep her feet. Her face was white and her eyes were staring as she approached the Gethsemane of motherhood. Despair, unutterable anguish and a ferocious determination to protect the unborn kept her moving when each step was a tragedy. Dresser, disregarding the angry yells of his master, ran after Rigaud and spoke briefly. The commander and other Frenchmen at once were solicitous and showed the expectant mother all kindness.

Boughs were hastily cut from trees and fashioned into a comfortable chair, and in this Mrs. Smead was carried for the rest of the day. At ten o'clock that evening she gave birth to a daughter. On the following morning Norton baptized the child. The mother named her Captivity. From then on mother and babe were carried on a litter spread with bear and deer skins.

* People of the place of flint, i. e., Mohawks.

When they came to deserted farmhouses, the order was given to burn, and the return march was marked by smoke by day and rosy skies at night. All cattle were killed and the crops were ruined. Where they had spared, on hastening to attack the fort, was now a scene of devastation. All habitations in the valley of the Hoosac were burned to the ground. Horses were found on different farms, and the prisoners least able to walk were allowed to ride.

Burnham was on excellent terms with his master. Gainengoton boasted of the white men he had killed. Burnham boasted of the Indians he had slain, passing beyond the truth in his recitals. Tugg was held in awe because of his bald head and cropped ears. He indulged in audacity and insolence on all occasions. He and the Robson girl were on a plane of estimation far above that of any other prisoner, an unique example of savage endorsement—the most hardened and villainous and sweet simplicity; years of evil doing and the tender age of maidenly purity. Each was a strong medicine.

Dresser was permitted to carry his scythe. After Burnham told Gainengoton of his decapitating the Micmac at North Yarmouth, the Indians had him lock the blade in place and give a pantomime of the bloody business. In a minor degree he was medicine. That the prisoners were treated kindly was the more surprizing when all the army knew four had died of their wounds during the first four days of travel.

Jessraday was the only man held by the Indians who was treated harshly. Burnham was quick to notice the heavy packs he was made to carry. Even after horses were procured he was not permitted to ride. On the third night out Burnham entered the Indian camp and found his friend leaning against a tree and on the edge of physical collapse. Burnham seated himself and requested Gainengoton to call the warriors about him to listen to a story. The savages were as eager as children. When the silent audience was seated, the borderer related Jessraday's dream.

A strong belief in dreams was elemental in the nature of all the interested listeners. The tragic and dramatic appealed intensely to them. Their folklore was made up of gruesome tales wherein little people, giants and the elements personified played the leading rôles. Nor did the Indians consider these as fairytales but as actual

happenings. The French Iroquois, remembering the myths of their pagan ancestors, still believed them to be so many truths. The Black Robes had never succeeded in washing from their minds the conviction that skeletons swam in a certain moonlighted lake inside the Long House. The western and eastern Indians were as firmly credulous of similar weird and grotesque recitals. Jessraday's dream was readily accepted as an omen that inevitably would be fulfilled. Jessraday was doomed by the gods.

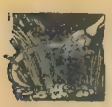
After describing the dream, Burnham sternly added:

"You chiefs and warriors be very careful you do not get in the way of the dead man riding. See that when he hunts for this man at night, he finds him alive and unharmed. If he opens his dead eyes to look for this victim it will be very bad for you if he finds the white man dead or weak from blows. No forest is large enough for you to hide from him. Do not walk in front of that dead rider."

He rose. Jessraday querulously asked:

"What have you been talking about? Why can't I have something to eat and some water to drink?"

"I've told them you are a brave man and must be treated like a warrior, not like a squaw. I hope you will not have to carry packs tomorrow." To Gainengoton he said, "This white man is very weak. He needs food and water. Tell those who do not understand the tongue of the Kaniengehaga that I think I hear the sound of galloping hoofs above the trees."



ALL the Iroquois French understood the threat, and there was a scramble to bring bowls of corn and fresh beef and water. From then on Jessraday rode a horse and was treated with the respect due to a victim reserved for the vengeance of the gods.

Burnham saw but little of his sister and the Robson girl except when the army camped at night. The Canadians marched some distance apart from the Indians, although some of the French officers were always with the warriors. When the evening fires were lighted, the borderer would seek his sister. She was treated with great respect and was held in such high esteem by the savages that they permitted her husband to travel in her company. To the surprize of his friends and the great joy of his wife, Wilks showed rapid improvement under the hardships of the journey. Tugg told some of his fellow captives this return to health resulted from Wilks' being removed for a time from Nancy's medicinal treatment.

"Now he's back with that woman he'll wither away and die if she begins dosing him. That's the white truth, my stout boys. Another bowl of her —— root-grog would have cut loose my moorings and sent me drifting astern."

The expedition was remarkable in several particulars. During his raid Rigaud's army burned some two hundred scattered buildings, had destroyed growing crops and much livestock. But none of these farms had afforded his warriors a scalp as all the people had fled to Albany. The sixty Abnakis sent to ambush Williams' party at Deerfield returned with several scalps and a prisoner. They had lost two of their leading warriors. Despite the weakness of the Fort Massachusetts garrison, but one scalp was taken. The Indians lost two, killed outright, and four were dead from wounds. For so large a force the fruits of victory were meager compared with the scalps and captives obtained by small bands ranging at will. With the exception of Reed, all the prisoners, half of them ill, were to live to reach Canada. But the dead rider had marked ten of these, including Mrs. Smead* and her infant, and they were to find their graves on the St. Lawrence.

Recrossing the branches of Wood Creek, the army finally reached East Bay, where the younger DeMuy held the boats ready for the return to Fort St. Frederic. During the last march Burnham, at Gainengoton's request, repeated his adventures the night he scouted outside the fort and again described how he skilled the red sentinel.

"You are a brave man," declared Gainengoton. "You would die very hard and do us great honor. But you shall live. You will be a brave son of a chief. You shall live with me and take a woman from our people."

Burnham expressed himself as being delighted and highly honored, and urged that all the prisoners held by the Indians be exchanged according to Rigaud's promises.

Gainengoton replied:

"It is not for the French to say what the people of the Sault, of the Kennebec

*Her husband was exchanged and was killed by Indians almost immediately after returning home.

and Detroit shall do with their prisoners. They will be exchanged, for we can buy many things with the money. You will stay with me. The little man who scalps himself will be asked to stay, and the old man with long, crooked knife. The man who hides at night in his sleep from the dead man riding is free to go. If he is hurt while living with us, the dead man riding will be angry. We hope he will go away. We will give him road-belts so no wild men from Detroit or Mackinac will hurt him. We will ask no money for him. If we had known how he hides in his sleep, he would have been left at the fort. Who wants to feel a ghost is sitting by the kettle? Who knows if the dead man riding will not turn his eyes on a man of the Kaniengehaga?"

As the prisoners were being apportioned to the boats Nancy Wilks had a moment to speak with her brother. She said—

"God's goodness has brought us through alive."

"We have fared well. Where is Hoped-For Robson?"

"Helping Mrs. Smead with the baby. After this fuss is over she will be married and have babies of her own to care for."

"I'll see you at the fort, if not on the way," he hurriedly said.

Nancy placed a strong hand on his shoulder and calmly continued:

"I've told her you were an awkward lump with no spirit when it came to women. She's the same as said she'll be your woman or never marry. Of course, I first had to tell her for you that you wanted her to be your wife."

"Merciful love! Good ——, Nance, why do you do such things? How dare you do such things? I—"

"There, there, little brother. It's settled. You two must get exchanged at once. If the climate agrees with Wilks, I'll stay on a while—"

It was Burnham's turn to interrupt, and she knew by the changing expression of his dark, bony face that he was alarmed.

"I must get back among the Indians," he harshly broke in. "I see a man I don't want to see me."

He left her abruptly and moved along the shore to where the Indians were guarding their prisoners. He searched for Gainengoton and, finding him, bruskly announced:

"A chief should ride with a chief. Where is Gainengoton's canoe?"

"A son should ride with his father. The canoe is there."

And he pointed along the bank.

"If Onontio's son should send soldiers to take Gainengoton's son away, would Gainengoton tell his son to go?"

The chief guessed the truth between the lines. He patted the handle of his French tomahawk and replied—

"The Great Onontio himself can not take a son from Gainengoton's house if the son wishes to remain."

Burnham felt greatly relieved, yet hurried to the canoe. He almost collided with Jessraday, who stared at him strangely. Burnham whispered:

"Tugg and I are in danger. One of the gun smugglers I was telling you about is here. Warn Tugg if you see him. He will recognize Tugg at a glance. I believe he saw me when I ran to the fire on the point. If he names us as the slayers of the Frenchman it will go hard with us if the savages give us up."

Jessraday nodded absent mindedly and quietly said—

"He saw me."

"Impossible! Wake up, man. You act queer. The savages are watching you. You never saw the gun smuggler. There is not a savage in this army who will lift a hand against you, no matter what you do."

Jessraday threw back his head and laughed loudly. The Indians hastily drew farther away from him. Controlling his unnatural mirth, he told Burnham—

"All the savages in North America can not save me."

"Are you crazy?" growled Burnham.

"No. I have reached the valley of the shadow. The dead rider saw me last night."

"You still believe that nonsense?"

"I heard the pounding of hoofs far off as I have heard them before. They came nearer and nearer until the noise of them seem to split the heavens. I was more afraid than ever before—"

"Jessraday, you're a white man, and you owe it to the color of your hide—"

"I was in an open stretch of road with no cover near. I ran as I never ran before, keeping to the road. There were bushes and woods ahead. I dared not look back even when the hoofs sounded almost at my heels. The noise was horrible. I reached the bushes and threw myself into them.

Then came the terror of waiting, although it was but a second. The horseman stopped. The bushes were tall and I could not see him. But he stopped, Burnham. I was lying on my back. I saw the bushes move. Then I saw him! And he saw me! Yes. He leaned forward and the coins dropped from his eyes. The hollow sockets stared down into my face. My ——, man! You can't understand the horror of it. A skeleton and a skull! And worst of all, when he rode back, he rode slowly, as one who has ended a hunt. Always before he has galloped away like the wind. But he rode back slowly. The hunt was ended."

"Good heavens, Jessraday, you call yourself a sensible man and yet you believe such foolishness as that?" gasped Burnham, yet feeling his own forehead wet as he saw the sweat streaming down the drawn face.

"He saw me. Death will be easy after the way I felt when he leaned over his horse and stared down on me and then slowly rode away. I only ask the chance of making a good finish."

And he turned and walked to a dugout and the savages drew back and gave him a wide path.

## CHAPTER XI

### TUGG IS MUCH WANTED

WITH the exception of a few canoes the flotilla bearing the army arrived at Fort St. Frederic* late in the afternoon. This important fortification had witnessed the return of many war-parties with scalps and prisoners, and was a constant source of annoyance to the colonies. It was located on steep, black limestone rocks at the tip of the peninsula that juts north between the waters of Wood Creek and Lake Champlain. This peninsula averages about a mile in width, with the fort occupying the highest point. It marked the site of the first French settlement on Champlain. Since 1731 land had been cultivated in patches on the point and quite extensively across the creek on the eastern shore.

On the east side of the fort was a tall tower, bomb-proof and pierced for cannon. Old soldiers, veterans of Anne's and William's wars, were the first settlers. They found the soil good on both sides of the creek. In the vicinity of the fort were small houses and a little church. On the point across the creek was a stone windmill and several houses. This was known as Windmill Point at first. War forced the settlers to return to the St. Lawrence or to take refuge near the fort. The little settlement remained deserted throughout George's War and later, probably because of the smokeless chimneys, was known as Chimney Point.

It was on the east shore that Gainengoton and some of his followers landed before proceeding to the fort. With the chief was Burnham and Tugg. The latter was not welcome as the Indians believed him to be under the protection of a strong medicine. He had elected to ride in the canoe with Burnham, and Gainengoton never for a moment thought of forbidding his presence. Both prisoners were glad to be on the east shore where the gun smugglers would not see them.

After the canoes were drawn up near the mill and fires were lighted to cook meat and fish, Gainengoton told Burnham:

"Tonight a chief must cross the water and talk with Onontio's chief* at the fort. My son will stay here."

"Does my friend, the little man, stay here?"

"Ask the owl where he will stay. Or the wind where it will blow. He can walk to those hills and over them and no red man will stop him."

And he pointed to the silhouette of the Green Mountains.

Burnham glanced at the top of the mill where several soldiers were curiously staring down at them.

"Onontio's Long Knives may take us across to the fort," he suggested.

"They will not touch a man wearing a chief's wampum. They will not touch the little man who scalps himself if he stays in this place. If he runs away in the night they can not catch him."

And his eyes sparkled as if with hope that Tugg would make his escape before morning. He added—

"But my son will be here when I come back."

"He will be here," assured Burnham. "A great chief should have two sons. This little man is very brave. He would do great honor to his new father."

*Named in honor of Frederic Maurepas, Minister of the Marine and Colonies. Always called Crown Point by the English.

*Captain Pierre Jacques Payen de Noyan, commander of Fort St. Frederic.

Gainengoton would not entertain any such thought. Tugg was a medicine to be avoided. The chief was uneasy under the staring gaze of the yellow eyes.

"He is no man's prisoner unless Onontio takes him. He scalps himself. He can go where he will. There is not mate for him in the Red Bird's home. Let him walk away in the night. The fort warriors will not try to catch him. His uncle, the owl, will lead him back to the English settlements."

"If he is no man's prisoner, why can not Onontio take him now?" demanded Burnham, perplexed and worried.

Tugg interrupted, asking what the talk was about. Burnham told him, and Tugg stoutly replied:

"I'm no Indian to pick my way through the woods. I won't go into the woods alone. Make him promise not to turn me over to the French."

Burnham turned to the chief for an answer to his question. Gainengoton slowly said:

"Onontio's men will not touch him until after he runs away. They saw a chief bring him here."

"He is my brother. The French do not like him. He surrendered to Gainengoton when the redmen demanded prisoners. He is very strong medicine. He wants a belt that will keep him from the French. His medicine will not hurt Onontio's red children."

"He said he gave himself to the tribes, not to Gainengoton's people," the chief corrected. "If he does not run away tonight, the tribes may say Onontio's son may have him. Why ask a chief to help him? Let his strong medicine save him."

He turned quickly and hurried with his men to the canoes, eager to cross to the fort. His men were impatient to be dancing the scalps and warming their hearts with brandy. Burnham stared morosely after the bobbing canoes. Tugg stretched himself on the ground and philosophically said—

"Fair winds with never a storm brewing for you, my stout lad, but the plank is over the side for old Ben Tugg."

"We still live. We have not been harmed."

Tugg came up on one elbow and hoarsely whispered—

"Let's drop astern and make the best of the night before the old beggar comes back."

"I can't go with you. I promised to remain here."

"Good ——! What's a promise given to a red ——?" snarled Tugg.

"He will keep his promise to keep me out of the hands of the French even if it costs him his life. He believes I will be here when he comes back. He looks on me as his son. I wear his wampum."

"You'll keep a promise made to that scut when it means he'll let them chop what's left of me into pieces!" wrathfully demanded Tugg.

"You can go away now. No savage or Frenchman will stop you. The men in the mill saw the chief bring you here and leave you. Not until tomorrow morning will any one look for you, and no Indian will chase you. With so long a start you surely can keep ahead of a few soldiers."

"I won't prowl alone through that wilderness. And I couldn't go if I wanted to. Here comes the Frenchies."

"You can walk east into the firs or up the shore, and no Frenchman will prevent you going."

"I won't go alone. If they only knew how many of their weasands I've slit!"

And he glared ghoulishly at the four soldiers now coming from the mill.

One of the soldiers greeted:

"I am called Gaspard, m'sieurs. Are you the expedition that is to take Canada?"

And he grinned broadly.

"The expedition will soon be along," answered Burnham. "Taking Canada will be good fun after cracking that hard nut of a Louisburg."

The fellow winced.

"You are not in position to talk insolently. I came to offer you oil made from bear's grease to put on your hands and face to keep off the insects. But if you're about to take Canada, you won't mind being eaten alive by tiny black flies."

Burnham had no desire to arouse the ill will of the soldiers, and he was about to make some conciliatory reply when Tugg jeered:

"You dogs bark loud so long as you're near your stone kennel. I've seen your like weeping like babies."

The four gaped at him in amazement. Then Gaspard cried:

"*Sapristi!* We can soon pull your fangs, old wolf-dog."

Tugg came to his feet like a cat, the yellow fires glinting in his eyes. He challenged—

"Wait till I git a sharp stick, a sharp piece of rock, anything, and I'll see the inside of your throat, frog-eater."

THE four closed about him, muttering threats and working themselves up to a pitch where they would do bloody mischief. Burnham pushed his way between Gaspard and Tugg and, in the voice of a chief, haughtily announced:

"I am the adopted son of Gainengoton. This man also is his son. If Gainengoton returns and finds this wampum has not saved us from abuse, then all the French in North America can't save your hides."

And he touched the string of wampum hanging from his neck.

"Have a care, Gaspard," warned a man. "They came with the chief. He left them here unbound and without guards. Let us be patient and wait till they are traded to monsieur the commandant for brandy and goods."

"We fear nothing from real Frenchmen," said Burnham. "And you men are only fort soldiers. Put aside your weapons and we'll whip the four of you."

"We'll kill them all with our bare hands!" screamed Tugg.

"M'sieur De Noyan will be very stern, Gaspard," whispered one of the men.

Gaspard scowled ferociously, then swallowed his pride and walked back to the mill. The last man to speak told Burnham:

"Gaspard is angry because we can not cross to the fort and join the merrymaking. But you should not have spoken to him as you did. We brought no black wampum to you. We were anxious to learn of M'sieur Rigaud's success. We hear but little news while kept on this shore."

"This man is inclined to be neighborly, Tugg. We can not refuse white belts." Then to the Frenchman, "Captain Rigaud has captured Fort Massachusetts and burned many deserted houses in the Hoosac Valley. He was wounded in the right arm. He lost six savages and had some soldiers wounded. We lost one man by a bullet. Another died from disease."

"M'sieur is more polite," affably replied the soldier. "Why not come to the mill and get the view from the top and tell my companions about the fight at the fort? And here is the oil to put on your hands and face. If you are here tomorrow I will show where you can dig some tender roots of the dandelion to use for a salad. If it were earlier in the season I could give you some young roots of the burdock."

Burnham took the small jar of oil and replied:

"Six men lost their tempers. It was very foolish. We will go to the fort. I see you have guns."

"Six small cannon on the top. We can look a great distance up the river. The English from the south will be seen long before they can reach us."

"This is where the fort should stand," decided Burnham, sweeping his gaze over the point. "If not for you men in the mill, our army could paddle along the western shore and almost to the fort unseen."

"The fort is very strong. But m'sieur is right in saying this is the place for St. Frederic to stand. It is very lonely here. We have a hard time not to quarrel among ourselves. But come along. My companions will say I am trying to make friends secretly with the English."

Tugg refused to enter the fort. Burnham left him smearing oil on his face. As they reached the entrance the soldier loudly called out:

"Here is news about M'sieur Rigaud's great victory. I have given oil to the Englishman. The hatchet is buried. Be careful of your talk, worthless ones."

"Bring m'sieur the prisoner up here where the air is cool and the view excellent," Gaspard shouted back.

The two climbed to the top of the mill, and Burnham drew a deep breath as he gazed at the wonderful panorama of lakes and mountains and forest. The Green Mountains bulked high. On the west shore of Champlain was a steep range with fog rolling off the top like dark smoke from a kiln.

"Wonderful!" he exclaimed.

"Well worth holding, eh?" said Gaspard, a broad grin now making his brown face look very amiable.

"Well worth taking," said Burnham. "The English love such sightly places."

"Tell us of Rigaud and his great victory, if you will be so kind," hungrily spoke up another soldier.

Burnham gave a graphic description of the siege and surrender and, in concluding, stressed the cost to Rigaud and again mentioned Knowlton's death as the only English loss by violence. The soldiers were

jubilant. Rigaud had defied the English. He had burned and killed and brought back more than a score of prisoners. Gaspard was in excellent humor. He boasted:

"M'sieur is kind to tell us all this. We could hear it at the fort, but we can not cross until relieved. M'sieur was shut up so tightly in the fort he did not hear what we have learned. If we wait for the English to come, we shall be ancient men before the first scouts come down Lake Scarement or the little river.* By this time the English should be thinking of others things. When they wake up it will be too late."

Burnham simulated amusement and quietly asked—

"How long since Canada has received news ahead of the English colonies?"

"Since the spring of last year," promptly replied Gaspard. "Louisburg heard the declaration of war weeks ahead of Boston. M'sieur will remember how Governor Duquesnal sent Captain Duvivier to burn Canseau before the colonies knew his gracious Majesty had declared war. I was at the burning of Canseau."

"A small fishing station. A miserable place," said Burnham. "And how did Canada profit by the great advantage she had by knowing, weeks before the colonies, that war had commenced? She should have burned Boston and New York and Albany. But after burning the fishermen's huts at Canseau, Duvivier went to attack Annapolis. Possibly m'sieur was present when Duvivier, with four hundred Micmac and Malecite savages managed to kill two poor men working in a garden. Besides the savages Duvivier had a hundred regulars. The cows of the garrison were walking through the sand ramparts, but Duvivier could not pass. After three weeks of waiting your captain ran away without making an attack."

Gaspard's face flushed with anger, yet he endeavored to control himself. He stiffly replied:

"So? But wait. Your governors will be singing another tune. They will not have any stomach for invading Canada. They will soon find their own house is on fire."

"Words, words," scoffed Burnham, and he hungrily waited to learn more.

His conductor joggled Gaspard's arm and muttered:

"My friend, a man's tongue is as bad as a wife for getting him into trouble. Let us talk no more of war. The hatchet is buried between us and this man so long as he is prisoner."

"I feel no ill will toward you men as individuals," assured Burnham.

"The enemies of Canada are my enemies," coldly answered Gaspard, turning to descend. "M'sieur better join his friend."

Burnham left the fort and returned to Tugg and briefly explained how close he came to learning something of possible value.

"Bah! What good to hear something if you can't tell it in Albany or New York," snarled Tugg. "What the —— good is oil to a man who needs strong grog? I'd like to cut all their throats."

Burnham sat by the fire, his hands locked about his knees. Tugg began one of his evil ballads. Burnham impatiently hushed him, and rebuked:

"Where's your head? Can't you understand the man was about to tell me something that possibly Shirley should know? I tell you the French are up to some game. I must get across to the fort tomorrow."

Tugg eagerly whispered—

"If any word is to go to Shirley you're the brave lad to carry it."

"I will carry it when I discover what it is."

"Now speaks a rib of oak! And old Ben will go with you. We can start now. It grows dark."

"I have no talk yet to take to Governor Shirley."

"Why, lookee, lad, 'tis enough to tell Shirley the French are up to something. Once he's warned he'll find the truth fast enough."

"The truth is in the fort across the water. A word or two may be dropped there. I am no fool. Just a hint will be enough."

"But if you go to the fort that —— gun smuggler may name you. Then you'll be clapped in irons."

"I shall learn nothing definite by staying here. And it's only a question of hours before Gainengoton will take me to the fort, whether I will or won't. As for the smuggler, perhaps he never saw me. He had made a break for the woods before I ran to the fire. But he'll name you. Never a doubt about that. Remember, we'll both be taken across in the morning unless you run away tonight. If you are wise you will start south before the chief returns."

* Wood Creek.

TUGG stared gloomily to the south where the perspective was being foreshortened as twilight encroached upon and blurred the waters of the creek.

"A storm or a calm, 'tis all the same to weather-worn old Ben," he mumbled. "But no fresh-water cruising and losing my bearings in the cursed woods. No, no! I'll bide here and take my chances with a French plank and a solid shot at my heels. But what would Ned say? ' 'Tis better to swim in the sea below than to hang in the air and feed the crow.' But fresh water, Ned? Ah, there's a difference! You'd never choose a fresh-water death for your last swim, old gunpowder drinker. You'd never die in fresh water or in these —— woods, Teach."

Burnham told him—

"Men go crazy talking to themselves."

They sat in silence, each thinking of his own dilemma. The night darkened and the fires on the opposite point blazed again in the black waters. Burnham was picturing the scene across, and his inner gaze saw naked savages dancing around the fires, dancing the scalps brought from Deerfield and Saratoga. Tugg's vision was wider, and roamed through nearly a half a century of wickedness and dangers with the seven seas for a background.

The fire died to a wisp of smoke. Gainengoton and his own men did not return. Burnham propped up the canoes on their sides and crawled under one and went to sleep. Tugg remained at the fire for some time, stirring the ashes and trying to decide what he should do. His life was nearly spent, and the future held nothing for him except the wretchedness his evil career had earned him; and yet he was very tenacious to hold on to the last breath.

There was nothing to prevent him from taking a canoe and paddling up the creek to East Bay or turning into Lake George and making an attempt to reach the Hudson. Had he been adrift on a bit of wreckage a thousand miles from any shore he would have accepted his plight as a part of his vocation. He understood the sea. As a castaway he would have set about saving himself. But interminable woods and strange noises disturbed his confidence. He was as vicious as a cornered rat. His life had taught him to accept almost any risk; but the mountains and wild woods sapped his courage. He fancied he heard Ned Teach laughing at him.

He walked to the water, stared across at the reflected lights on the point. Burnham had said they would be taken across on the morrow. If recognized as one of the smugglers' assailants he believed he would receive no mercy. He had passed through French hands twice and his stubs of ears and his chest still hurt. And yet the loneliness of the endless woods, the crashing trees and the harmless animal sounds were not to be endured alone. With Burnham at his side he feared the forest none; alone he would feel much as a landlubber would if dropped overboard into a shark-infested sea. He was used to wide fields of vision; the green roof of the forest became as oppressive as the tomb. He experienced the sensation of being buried alive. Whispering oaths, he returned to his blanket and finally managed to sleep.

The two were up early in the morning, and boiled a kettle and ate. Gaspard joined them and endeavored to be civil. Tugg bristled belligerently until Burnham signaled for him to desist. After a few desultory remarks Gaspard carelessly remarked—

"There must be many troops in Albany by this time."

"The army camps outside of the town—some below on the meadows and the rest above on the flats. With the large number coming from Virginia and other southern colonies, the town would scarcely do."

Gaspard smiled cynically and asked—

"Do you know what I believe m'sieur the commandant will say when you tell him as much?"

"That he doesn't believe it," carelessly answered Burnham.

"M'sieur saves me from appearing to be impolite," murmured Gaspard. "If the messieurs desire they may enter the mill and look for their English army. It may be coming down Wood Creek even now."

Burnham ignored this piece of sarcasm and promptly accepted the invitation. Tugg chose to remain by the canoes. The soldier led the way to the top and, under the morning sun, the view to the south was even more extensive.

"You see no English?" remarked Gaspard.

"Not yet. When they come you will not see any water for the number of their boats. I still wonder that the French did not build

the fort on this point and cut a ditch behind from the creek to the lake. The limestone is loose and soft. A fort so situated would always be supplied with fresh water and protected on the land side from an enemy."

"It is a good mill, It has ground much flour for the fort. The fort can not be taken. It can not be surprized so long as we are here. When does the army start up the Hudson?"

"It should be moving now."

Gaspard smiled and remarked:

"It's queer none of M'sieur Rigaud's scouts saw any signs of it. They went far down the river. Seventeen Missisaugas left M'sieur Rigaud's army before he attacked your fort. A runner has come in saying the band went six leagues below Albany and took four scalps. They will soon come in. "

"That's foolish talk," scoffed Burnham. "The Missisauga band talk loud to take courage from their own voices. They did not go beyond Saratoga, where they killed one or two settlers who had not forted themselves. Canoes come from the fort. I must join my friends."

The newcomers were Gainengoton and his followers. With the exception of the chief, the Indians showed the effects of the night's debauch. They paddled listlessly. On landing, several were taken violently ill and remained lying face down on the ground. Gainengoton greeted—

"My son is here as his promise said he would be."

"Why should he leave his new father?"

"That is good. If he ran away and was caught by the French, he would then be Onontio's prisoner," replied Gainengoton. He grimly added, "And if caught by the Red Bird's men, he would wear a string of hot ax-heads in place of a chief's wampum. Tell the man who scalps himself we will cross to the fort."

"He is no man's prisoner. He can go where he will," reminded Burnham.

"He will go to the fort. Onontio's son has said both white men shall go there. Your friend is bad medicine. None of my people will make him go. But Onontio's son sends a talk to the soldiers to bring him if he doesn't come with you."

"I kept my promise and stayed here. Now you give me to the French," rebuked Burnham.

Gainengoton's painted face grew ferocious with anger, but he controlled himself and answered:

"Onontio's son will talk with the Red Bird's prisoner. A chief can lead a prisoner anywhere in Canada and keep him. Come."

Burnham repeated the command to Tugg.

"Greasing the plank for old Ben," mumbled Tugg. "But I'm not over the side yet."

And he clapped his hand to his empty cutlass scabbard.

They entered the chief's canoe and Burnham took a paddle. None of the Indians offered to accompany them. When they were a few rods from shore Tugg muttered—

"A crack over the head! The body overboard, and we can turn south and try for it!"

"Madness, man."

GAINENGOTON only caught the sound of whispering. His head came about and he stared at Tugg malevolently. Tugg met his gaze squarely, and the chief, remembering the little man was bad medicine, faced about.

They skirted the tip of the point and landed beyond the bomb-proof covered way. The place seemed to be deserted except for a few sentinels. The prisoners' camp was a quarter of a mile away, near the quarry from which the stone for building the fort was procured. The Indians were with them. With the exception of those detailed for guard duty over the prisoners, practically all of Rigaud's red army was ill or sleeping off the effects of the night's drinking.

"Where is Rigaud?" asked Burnham as he helped carry the canoe over the rocks.

"He was at the fort. Now he is with the prisoners. Strong water makes red children forget they are brothers. Some Ottawa men fought with some Abnaki men. Some were cut with knives. Onontio's fighting son stopped the trouble, and stays with them till they can shake the evil out of their heads."

"He should move his prisoners to the fort. If one of them is hurt, Rigaud will be like a man who breaks a promise made while he holds white wampum in his hands."

"The tribes have not traded their prisoners. They say they will take them to Montreal, where they can get better goods. Rigaud's prisoners want to stay with their friends and not come into the fort. Now

the drinking and eating is finished, the tribes will have a council and say if they will trade the prisoners here or at Montreal."

"I have a sister among Rigaud's prisoners. I want to talk with her."

"She is Rigaud's prisoner. She wants to fight. No chief would let her sweep out his lodge."

This was the best answer Burnham could get to his request. Gainengoton sat down, waiting for DeNoyan to send for the white men. Inside the fort the soldiers were at morning prayers. An Indian and white man were coming up the lake in a canoe and paddling fast. Gainengoton watched them for a few moments and muttered—

"A talk comes from Montreal."

Tugg laughed aloud, amused at the antics of a three months' old black bear playing with a dog. Around the point were many bark canoes, dugouts and *bateaux* made by the garrison. Several cows, kept by officers at the expense of the Crown, roamed at will. The houses of the old settlers were small and were built of boards set on end like stockade timbers. They impressed Burnham as being rather squalid, and not nearly so weather-tight as log cabins. In addition to the houses there was a small church. The buildings, the patches of gardens, the grazing cows, all gave an air of permanent occupancy.

Gainengoton had halted a short distance from the ditch on the west side of the fort and was patiently waiting for Captain DeNoyan to send for the white men. He noticed that the soldiers were no longer watching him and his prisoners, but were staring down the lake. The canoe, much nearer now, was coming on under the impetus of two skillful paddlers, the third steering. From the high tower on the east side as well as from the ramparts soldiers were watching the onracing craft.

"A big talk comes from Montreal," said Gainengoton.

But Tugg's gaze was directed toward the stone quarry. He caused Burnham to jerk his head about by exclaiming:

"Root-medicine woman! Hope she won't try to dose me. Bitter'n ——!"

Nancy Wilkes was striding toward them with one of Rigaud's militiamen racing after her. Burnham jumped to his feet to run and meet his sister and prevent the man from laying hands on her. Gainengoton immediately stood behind him, a hand clamped on his shoulder, his gaze curious and expectant and he beheld the militiaman cut down the distance.

Nancy discovered her brother and waved her arms. Burnham attempted to cast off the chief's hand but realized he must engage in a terrific struggle in order to break loose.

Tugg said—

"Do for him when I trip him!"

"Keep quiet if you want to live," warned Burnham.

And he relaxed and stood at ease and made no further attempt to break loose.

The Canadian began shouting angrily at Nancy. She gave him one glance and continued hurrying forward. He overtook her within a few rods of the three men, and Gainengoton grunted hopefully. The Canadian seized her by an arm. Instantly she turned and struck out as a man skilled with fist fighting would strike and knocked the soldier head over heels.

Gainengoton drew a deep breath and murmured:

"Squaw whips a man. She has a medicine arm."

Tugg leaped up and down and forgot his own danger as he shouted joyously—

"Each man to his gun, for the work must be done—"

"You're shouting yourself into a grave," warned Burnham. Then, when the chief removed his hand, he darted ahead and met his sister.

She enfolded him in a mighty embrace and exclaimed:

"You young rascal! We've been waiting for you to come and find us. Your sweetheart has worried about you."

"For heaven's sake, Nance, don't." he begged. "If you talk like that before the child—"

"Woman grown and knows her own mind."

"Have it that. But such talk will shame her terribly."

"Stuff and nonsense. Just because I'm big as a mountain and she's small as a mouse do you think we are so much different in our thoughts? She makes me talk about you when I'm trying to go to sleep."

"She thinks she's indebted to me. It's just the other way."

"Mebbe. I don't know. She told me last night you are the only man she'd ever dream of taking for her man."

"She's well? And how about Jessraday and Dresser?" he hurriedly asked.

"All the prisoners are well or getting better. But some of the Canadians are flat sick with the same distemper poor Wilkes and the others have suffered from."

The Canadian now joined the group and, in a voice husky with rage, commanded—

"You make tracks for the camp, madame, or I'll brain your brother."

"What does he say, Phil?"

"He says you must go back to the camp," interpreted Burnham. "I'd advise you to do so."

But Gainengoton understood enough French to catch the threat made against the borderer, and stepped before the soldier and scowled so menacingly as to cause the fellow to step back.

"Good land! I s'posed you'd be glad to see your old sister," she chided.

"I am, dear. Best sister ever. They'll take you to Canada right away and I know they'll be quick to exchange you." He smiled grimly and explained, "Your fighting ways, Nance, will make them want to be rid of you. Tell Hoped-For I asked about her health and know she will soon be back in the colonies."

"I'll say you sent your love."

"And tell Dresser and Jessraday some mischief is brewing and that I shall try to carry the news south. If they are free to walk about, tell them to come here. I may get a chance to speak with them. I'm glad the Canadians are having the same misery our poor people suffered."

"Some of the savages are sick with pleurisy and rheumatism. You say the French are planning something?"

"I don't know just what. The chief is getting uneasy. He's suspicious we're making plans."

She embraced him, kissed him with a loud smack and turned back. The Canadian walked several yards apart from her, scowling murderously. Gainengoton said:

"If the white woman was a Mohawk man, she would have a new name. When we get to my village on the Sault Saint Louis and your new name is called in the council and you are my new son, the Red Bird will talk about your sister with the medicine arm."

Tugg joggled Burnham's arm for him to turn about. The canoe was being lifted on the black rocks. The white man started on the run for the fort.

"He brings a big bag of talk to Onontio's son. Soon we shall have big fighting," prophesied Gainengoton.

The chief walked to the canoe and talked with the two paddlers. After ten minutes he returned to the prisoners and seated himself on the ground and began sharpening his scalping knife.

"The knife smells blood?" prompted Burnham.

"Ho! ho! It smells big blood."

Finishing with the knife, he produced from a bag, suspended from his neck, a small hand looking-glass, captured on a New England raid, and propped it between his feet. From the same bag he produced his paints and proceeded to decorate his fierce visage. A circle of white and a circle of green enclosed his eyes. From the bridge of his nose to the top of his shaven head he carefully drew three red lines. Circles of red and green, larger than the first, were drawn with the brush of beaten bark on the cheeks. These were connected with three white lines. He was just finishing when three officers emerged from the fort and walked toward him.

Hurriedly replacing his paints and the looking-glass, Gainengoton rose to his feet. For Burnham's benefit he said—

"Onontio's son walks first."

Burnham stared curiously at Pierre Jacques Payen, sieur de Noyan. He knew the commandant was related to M de Longueuil and that he had commanded at Fort Frontenac and had been an active emissary to the Five Nations and was still held in high esteem by the Senecas and the Onondagas. The latter called him "Our Son." His service for France in the New World commenced in 1721, when he was closely associated with Joncaire, the elder, at Frontenac and on the Niagara. Joncaire, the elder, was dead as were many other great captains of the west. But DeNoyan was still building for France in America and cooperating with the sons of his old friends.

ODDLY enough his long life on the various frontiers and amid savage scenes had never lessened his culture nor distracted him from his pursuits as a scientist nor discouraged his study of medicine. What was not commonly known among his English opponents was that his strong inclination for satirical *vers de societé* had aroused much

hostility against him among Frenchmen of high position.

His bearing was most pleasing as he walked ahead of Lieutenants Dumont and Herbin. Burnham little realized, as he admired the graceful carriage and observed the punctilious attention to dress, that he would live to see DeNoyan surrender the control of Lake Ontario to the English.

Lieutenant Herbin was distinguished for various bloody raids against Saratoga and other points on the frontier, and was to live to help besiege Fort William Henry, in a colonial war not yet foreseen. The three typed that class of resolute, capable, courageous men who upheld the glory of France for half a century and who instinctively developed what few of the colonists ever would possess—the capacity for winning and holding the esteem of the Indians. Not until Colonel William Johnson entered the Mohawk Valley to manage the affairs of his uncle, Sir Peter Warren, admiral of the naval forces in the Louisburg expedition, did DeNoyan and men of his kind meet a rival whose influence with the Iroquois outweighed theirs.

Captain DeNoyan shook hands with Gainengoton and inclined his head politely toward the prisoners, and asked in the Mohawk dialect—

"These are the two men the great Red Bird spoke of?"

"They are the men. Now Onontio's son has seen all the prisoners brought from Fort Massachusetts."

"Which man is your son, my child?"

"When his name is called in the council this will be my son."

And the chief placed a hand on Burnham's shoulder.

"And this other man? Who is his master?"

"He walks alone. He scalps himself."

Burnham explained—

"He is unfortunate enough to be bald-headed, m'sieur."

Tugg removed his wig. Gainengoton stepped away from him.

"What's this?" sternly demanded DeNoyan. "You've run against a sharp knife some time, my friend."

"That is true, m'sieur," muttered Tugg. "Many years ago. When I was a young man."

"Indians? It does not look like their work, for your head is still on your shoulders."

"The cruel Spanish, m'sieur."

"Ah, those Spaniards! They are a cruel people," said DeNoyan. "I should say you had suffered enough. We will arrange an exchange at Montreal. But will your people be willing to trade a whole Frenchman for an earless man?"

Tugg's face twisted with rage.

"Earless and armless they would think me worth a dozen Frenchmen."

Herbin and Dumont scowled. DeNoyan laughed silently and remarked—

"When you lost your ears you lost none of your high spirit, old man."

Then becoming grave and ceremonial, he addressed Gainengoton, saying:

"Will my child keep the big white man or take the bounty-money? The Red Bird can trade the money for many things."

"When the name is called in the council, a chief has taken a new son. He has said it," replied Gainengoton.

DeNoyan, striking a graceful pose and resting a hand on the hilt of a light dress sword, stared thoughtfully at Burnham and mused:

"You speak French well, my *coureur-de bois*. You have lived among us at some time."

"At Oswego and Montreal and Quebec I have worked beside Frenchmen and learned the language, m'sieur."

"In times of peace, I trust?" ironically queried the commandant.

"But of course. In times of peace, m'sieur."

Herbin whispered something over the commandant's shoulder. DeNoyan invited:

"Come inside the fort and have a cup of brandy or wine. The fortunes of war should not cause personal enmities."

"With the Mohawk's permission—for I am his prisoner until duly adopted—I shall be pleased to go with you, m'sieur."

Gainengoton shrugged his shoulders when addressed by the commandant and remarked:

"Who is to tell the son of a chief where he shall go? So long as he returns to his father he is as free as an eagle."

Tugg, disappointed not to be included in the invitation that promised strong drink, grumbled:

"A cut or two above old Ben, my big boy. Drink deep for me."

In the distance, approaching from the quarry, was a group of men. Burnham

could not tell whether Indians or whites or a mixed band was coming. He sensed danger. In English he rapidly warned:

"Strange sail. Cross over. I'll be at the mill soon."

As he turned to follow the commandant to the fort, Tugg started toward the canoes, his fears aroused as he spied the dots in the distance. Lieutenant Dumont sternly called after him—

"Halt! Where are you going?"

"Where I will, m'sieur," was the insolent reply.

Burnham groaned inwardly and cursed the fellow's stubbornness.

"*Ma foi!* But you crow loud, old cock. Come back here," ordered the lieutenant.

"I am a prisoner of the Indians. Tell my masters to make me come back," defied Tugg.

"*Par dieu!* We should coil a whip around those skinny legs," cried Herbin.

"Not so fast, messieurs," quietly restrained DeNoyan. "Let us find out where we stand. Whose prisoner is that man?" This to Burnham.

"He surrendered to the savages when M'sieur Rigaud broke his promise."

"What are you talking about?" sharply demanded the commandant, his voice displaying its cutting edge. "Broke his promise? An officer of his gracious Majesty breaking a promise? What trouble are you trying to make for yourself?"

"I should have said, 'when M'sieur Rigaud found he could not keep the promise he made at the parley outside the Fort Massachusetts gate,' " amended Burnham. "M'sieur Rigaud, in the presence of his officers, promised none of the prisoners should be given to the savages, that all the garrison should be prisoners of the French if we would surrender. But the Indians demanded a share of the prisoners. M'sieur Rigaud asked some of us to go with them. I volunteered, as did my companion there and two more of my friends. M'sieur Rigaud turned over the rest of the garrison to the savages, keeping for himself the women, children and officers. M'sieur Rigaud will tell you all this."

"War makes strange demands," harshly reminded DeNoyan. "Monsieur Rigaud is a man of honor. If he technically violated his promise it was to save your lives."

"I do not dispute that, m'sieur. I but stated facts. This companion of mine is a prisoner of the savages."

"But Gainengoton says he walks alone?"

"Nevertheless they were glad to accept him as a prisoner. He has traveled with them. Now they are afraid of him. They believe he is bad medicine. Yet he is their prisoner, and if they disown him, he should be sent back to the Hudson."

DeNoyan laughed softly at this reasoning, and protested:

"No, no, Monsieur Smooth Tongue. But we will not be harsh." To his lieutenants he said, "We will let the old rat walk freely, messieurs, until our allies decide what they will do with him. If they cast him off, because of his poor head, we will pay the bounty. Follow me."

AS THEY strolled to the entrance of the fort, Burnham saw Tugg by the canoes. He had not attempted to put one in the water, but stood staring toward the men slowly coming from the quarry. Once inside the tower, Burnham was ushered into a large living room, part of the commandant's quarters, and was invited to be seated at a long table, made massively and bolted to the floor. On this was brandy and wine and last season's cider.

DeNoyan poured the prisoner and himself a glass of wine and, after the others' glasses had been filled, they stood and in silence each drank his own toast. Then DeNoyan's hospitality was explained when he commenced a cross-examination of the prisoner.

Was it not true that Governor Clinton could make no headway against the Albany assembly? Was it not true that the Duke of Newcastle knew but little about the colonies and paid scant heed to Governor Shirley's suggestions and requests? Was not Rhode Island determined to give no aid, and had not Pennsylvania refused to give men, money or provisions? Evading, parrying, lying, telling half truths, Burnham unhesitatingly answered all the queries. His frankness was commended, but the commandant added:

"It is plain m'sieur is poorly informed on some matters. We could tell him better in Quebec."

The inquiry then shifted to the threatened invasion, and De Noyan first asked—

"Do not your royal governors know that

soon it will be too late in the season to march into Canada?"

"To the contrary, m'sieur," was the prompt reply. "They know there are but some six hundred houses in Quebec. They laugh at the fire-rafts above the city. There are fewer houses in Montreal, still fewer in Three Rivers. The capture of one of those towns means the surrender of the other two. The surrender of the three means the surrender of all Canada. It will be much easier than the capture of Louisburg, and the troops are better drilled and more trained to hardships. If none of the three towns are taken before winter sets in, then the army can be comfortably housed on the Isle of Orleans and wait until spring. Three cruising ships in the mouth of the St. Lawrence will be sufficient to stop all help from France." *

"Governor Shirley's plan remains the same? To send the New England troops up the St. Lawrence in company with the fleet from England?"

"That is part of the plan."

DeNoyan threw back his head and laughed softly. Meeting Burnham's angry eyes he politely explained:

"We are not laughing at you, monsieur. Your sincerity is obvious. We laugh to think that we Frenchmen up here in the woods have news ahead of Boston and New York. Monsieur, in all seriousness I assure you that the army will never sail from Boston. The colonies will be most fortunate if, by the time you are exchanged, there is anything of Boston left standing."

Burnham was chilled to the heart. DeNoyan would never waste time in trying to deceive a prisoner. The French had known weeks ahead of the colonies that their king had declared war. He feared the English had lost overwhelmingly on the continent and that the colonies must pay part of the price. Still his face was calm and unconcerned as he replied:

"I believe in m'sieur's sincerity, but he has been deceived. Some foolish story has crossed the ocean or some spy has brought him a poor talk. It is true that Governor Clinton has quarreled with the assembly, but that means nothing, and the colony is doing its share. Massachusetts and New Hampshire take the lead in pressing the issue, just as they did in taking Louisburg. The other colonies are ashamed they can not share in the glory of Louisburg, and are anxious not to be left out of the glory of taking Quebec. Mark my words, m'sieur, this fort is doomed. Before snow falls it will be ruins or housing an English garrison."

As DeNoyan remained silent, drumming his fingers lightly on the table and smiling amiably at his officers, Dumont asked:

"Monsieur, shall we not shake the faith of this prophet? He has been fortunate enough to have associated at some time in his life with our people. Would it not be more kind to tell him the truth?"

Herbin impatiently added:

"I would like to see his cursed assurance crumble into ashes. He doesn't matter. Just another prisoner. But he stands for the know-it-all manner of the English. If given his liberty and permitted to hurry the information to New York, he would arrive too late for the news to benefit the enemy."

DeNoyan mused for a few moments and then slowly began:

"My young men feel, monsieur, it's worth while to shake your confidence in the colonies and in your king. Fortify yourself with more wine and listen."

"Proceed, if you please, m'sieur. I am quite ready," murmured Burnham.

He carried himself well, and his bronzed face wore an expression of amused anticipation.

"Then hear the truth and cease your foolish dreaming," coldly began DeNoyan. "A French fleet of many sails is nearing your New England coast. Nothing can save Boston. Nothing can save New York. When Messieurs Shirley and Clinton learn the truth it will be too late even to man their coast forts. Boston and New York will go up in smoke. There will be no invasion of Canada."

Burnham's heart was lead as he heard this, but his hand trembled none as he slowly poured some wine. He sipped it and gazed unconcernedly at the commandant. Returning the glass to the table he said:

"I thank m'sieur for the information. I know he and his officers believe what has been said. But even if the fleet escapes the English fleet, it will find Boston and New York thoroughly prepared."

"They have not been prepared," hotly disputed Dumont. "We have intelligence that arrived just ahead of Monsieur Rigaud

*So Shirley wrote to Newcastle in July, 1746, in urging the importance of capturing Quebec.

and his army. This day we have received more intelligence from Quebec—"

"Messieurs!" sharply broke in DeNoyan. "I believe we have talked enough. We are not pleading a cause in a law court. We have been amusing ourselves while kindly opening the prisoner's eyes to the truth."

"I saw the messenger when he landed," said Burnham. "And with all regard for the honesty of your convictions, I now say that if turned loose, I would not exert myself in this depressing weather to carry your talk to the Hudson. If it is permitted I will return to Gainengoton."

"If you do not go soon he will be here with his Mohawks, asking for you," was the good-natured reply. "Another glass of wine, my unbeliever? No? Then you may retire."

Herbin exclaimed:

"Now what's the matter?" He was leaning from his chair and staring through a narrow window. "There's confusion by the water. *Pardieu!* I see a bald head being jerked about. Pardon me, Monsieur the Commandant, but our Englishman's queer friend seems to be in trouble."

And leaving his chair and snatching up his sword, he saluted DeNoyan and made for the door.

"Wait! I'll go!" called out the commandant in a strident voice.

"And you'd best hurry or my friend will come to harm," said Burnham.

"I am thinking of my savages and not your friend," was the harsh reply. "If the man is their prisoner, the soldiers must not bother him."

And he was through the door ahead of Herbin.

"I wish to stand by my friend," said Burnham.

"We'll both go," said Dumont. "Monsieur is the property of Gainengoton. He goes where he will until the chief trades him for the bounty."

THE group at the edge of the water quieted a bit on perceiving DeNoyan and his officers approaching. Nearly twoscore militiamen and Indians were crowded about Tugg and hiding him from view, unless one looked down from the fort. Because of his height and skill in working himself through a mob, Burnham approached near enough the center of the confusion to behold Jessraday and Dresser armed with paddles, snatched from a canoe. They were discouraging attempts to lay violent hands on Tugg. The militiamen were the offenders. The Indians were trying to keep the soldiers from Tugg, but their efforts were not aggressive, and consisted only of using their shoulders and crowding. None placed a hand on a soldier nor displayed a weapon. The militia were equally careful not to insult or threaten a redman.

Gainengoton came up and rapidly forced his way to the center of the gathering and stood beside Tugg and, speaking as a chief, called out:

"The Long Knives of Onontio are not to hurt the medicine-man who scalps himself. The Red Bird has spoken. This man has no wings and can not fly away. He is not a fish and can not swim away."

"I tell you white men he killed two Indians who came with Le Blanc to the point up the creek to get the guns Stirick and me brought up from Albany," accused a man.

Burnham recognized him as Berler. He was carrying an arm in a sling.

"Who killed Le Blanc?" howled a soldier.

"Another white man. I'll know him if I see him. But this wizened little —— killed Black Wind and Two Deaths while Le Blanc was being murdered. Send for my friend. He'll point him out as I have done."

Gainengoton understood enough French to get the gist of the accusation. He lifted a hand for silence and cried:

"This man gave himself to Onontio's red children. He cannot get away. It will be talked about."

"If he had a hand in Le Blanc's murder, he shall hang," DeNoyan told his officers.

He was standing on the edge of the crowd, content to listen before taking action. Now he proclaimed his presence and commanded:

"Fall back from the prisoner. Make room there."

Dumont and Herbin gave orders to the militia, and they fell back so as to form a wide lane, at the bottom of which stood Tugg, Dresser, Jessraday and the chief. Burnham's tall figure towered above the soldiers and within a few feet of the former pirate.

DeNoyan advanced until close to Tugg and, singling out the smuggler, he sternly demanded—

"Are you sure of what you have said?"

"Could I ever forget such a monkey of a man!" cried the smuggler.

Tugg yelped in rage and darted forward to close with him. The chief caught him by the shirt front and hurled him back and, in doing so, tore the garment open and revealed the deeply sunken imprint of the *fleur-de-lis*.

"A French branding iron has kissed him, monsieur," exclaimed Dumont to DeNoyan. "The lying dog said he had passed through Spanish hands."

Encouraged by this denunciation, the militia began pressing forward from the opposite side of the circle. Gainengoton's strident voice warned:

"This man belongs to the tribes. We do not want him. But let no man harm him until he has been given to Onontio's white children. The bones of the Potawatomi and Ottawa men must be covered. The warriors of those tribes will have a talk soon."

Then he spoke rapidly to his Mohawks, who quickly placed a canoe in the water and began pushing back those who blocked Tugg's retreat to the water.

DeNoyan asked—

"What does my son do with this man?"

"He carries him to the other shore to hold him fast until the far west tribes shall say what shall be done with him."

"You said he was medicine and that you did not want him," reminded the commandant.

"That was before it was known he killed Two Deaths and Black Wind."

"There is plenty of time. I must ask some questions." To the smuggler he said, "You would know any other men who were on the point when Le Blanc was killed?"

"There was a short, stout man they called Till. He drank heavily and was brave when drunk. There was the man who called himself the Leveler and who took Le Blanc's gold and silver. He—that man there! That man standing back of the Indian!"

And he broke off to point a quivering finger at Burnham.

TO BE CONCLUDED

# POST-OPERATIVE TREATMENT OF GUNSHOT WOUNDS

**by Leonard H. Nason**

IN THIS country, when a man is seriously injured he is hurried at once to the nearest hospital, put to bed in a quiet room and his relatives immediately notified, so that they may cluster about his bedside and let him know that he is badly hurt by discharging considerable water from their eyes and noses. Nurses and doctors move about silently on the linoleum floors. The patient, badly scared by the actions of his relatives and by the tremendous amount of attention he receives from the medical staff, usually loses his nerve and dies.

In France during the later part of the war, conditions were very different.

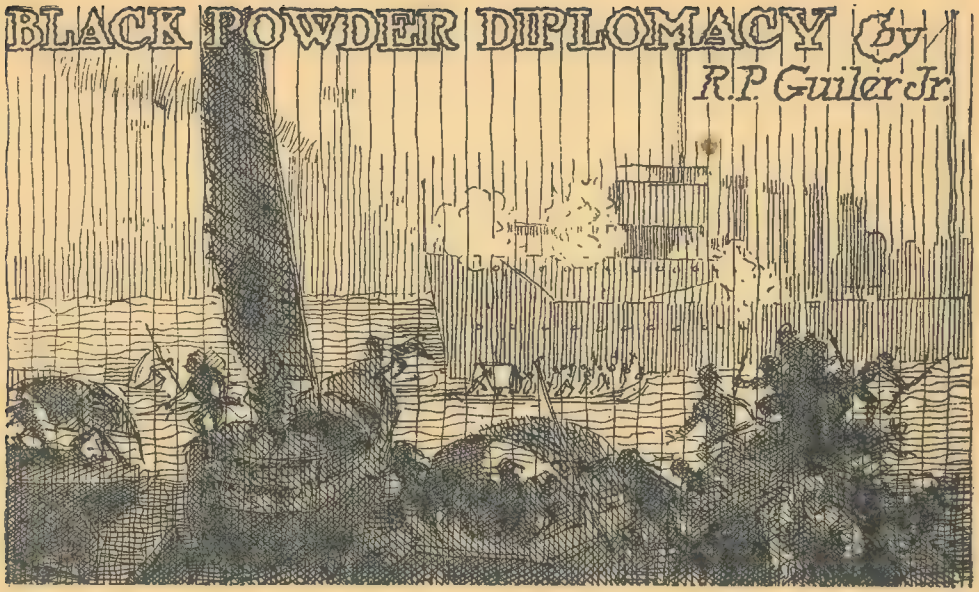
There was a man brought into the field hospital in Souilly suffering from a penetrating wound of the abdomen. His intermachinery was quite badly disconnected and his wound was twenty-four hours old. After he was operated on, he was removed to a ward in the hospital where he was allowed to recover consciousness or die as he saw fit. This ward was of the portable type, of the same construction used in portable garages in this country. It had a loose plank floor and the orderlies and stretcher-bearers ran up and down the ward in their hobnailed shoes. Men were coming in continually from the cutting room and were being carried out at all hours of the day and night either to hospital trains or to the morgue. The racket was ear-splitting.

On one side of the wounded man's bed was a soldier who had lost both legs and on the other side of the bed was a man who had a slight flesh wound of the forearm. The man who had lost the legs proceeded to die and the man with the flesh wound smoked cigarets incessantly and conversed in a loud voice with the man across the hall. The dead, the seriously wounded and the slightly wounded were jumbled together indiscriminately.

The man with the wound in his abdomen, figuring that he would not be thrown into such a bedlam if his wound was serious, decided that it would be foolish to die from it. At his own request he was removed from the ward to the base hospital on the second day after the operation.

# BLACK POWDER DIPLOMACY

By R. P. Guiler Jr.



THE consul's face was grim and set as he strode into his office. Slamming the door behind him against the raw, chilly air of the blustery January afternoon, he threw off his heavy overcoat and came near the glowing stove that stood in the center of the floor, and briskly rubbed his hands over the cheery blaze. The Chinese house coolie, who had been noisily mending the fire, looked up in alarm at his approach, and hastily gathering up his implements, shuffled quickly from the room.

Lieutenant Snyder, skipper of the U. S. Destroyer 313 which had been ordered to Nanking to protect American lives and property during the local war that was raging at the time, puffed complacently on his pipe as he eyed the consul questioningly from the depths of a huge easy chair.

"Well, what did the 'grand mogul' say this time?" he drawled finally.

The consul, without answering, shrugged his shoulders impatiently, and turning about made a grimace of disgust that was far more expressive than words. Glancing toward the window, he gave a start, and moving quickly, stepped over and pulled the curtain to one side, peering intently through the sleet-spattered panes.

"Good heavens, Skipper! Look at that, will you? Another army of them!" he exclaimed bitterly. "I hope that this outfit gets through without making any trouble."

Joining the consul at the window, the Naval commander could see a long column of gray-clad Funkienese troops reaching from the main gate in the great Nanking wall, over the rise past the drum tower near the American university. Like a great undulating snake, it filled the narrow, winding street from wall to wall, the terror-stricken women and children fleeing before it into their dirty hovels with whimpering cries.

Grotesque in their heavily cotton-quilted uniforms and woolly sheepskin caps, the troops, recruited from the slums and bandit bands of Mongolia and north China, plodded stolidly along beyond the walls of the consulate compound, their footfalls hushed by the deep layer of muddy slush that covered the uneven cobblestones.

Knowing little and caring less as to their destination or mission so long as their rice was assured and that an opportunity for looting would be given, they followed their leaders blindly, like a flock of sheep. An occasional pack of wolves—mongrel Mongols—showed up in the flock, their piercing eyes peering from wicked faces as they scowled about them; while here and there were white men—Russian refugees, who, rather than starve, had joined this motley crew and marched shoulder to shoulder with the common coolie.

Resplendent in their greatcoats and caps of fine furs, haughty young majors and their

aides jounced awkwardly along on shaggy Mongolian ponies at the head of each battalion. Clinging ludicrously with both hands to the saddle pommels, they glanced fiercely from side to side as if trying to appear grim and warlike; while orderlies marching along beside them, holding the bridle reins, imperiously waved all traffic to the side of the street as they approached. The few automobiles which had ventured out in the streets that day, much to the disgust of the foreign owners, were required, with threatening gestures, to run up on the narrow sidewalks and stop their motors until after the officers had passed.

Bringing up the rear were the stragglers and commissariat. The cooks, carrying the few necessary pots and pans slung on bamboo poles across their shoulders, trotted along in the tireless gait of the Chinese coolie, an occasional one singing the monotonous "eh ho" in time to his footsteps, while the pans jingled an accompaniment. Dozens of cowering rickshaw coolies who had been brutally impressed into service were hauling their rickshaws heavily laden with sacks of flour and cases of ammunition; the cold, freezing mud splashing over their bare feet and legs; the perspiration running down their bared chests in streams as they were urged to greater speed by the threatening bayonets.

"Whew!" whistled the Naval officer, his sympathies aroused, "I should never have believed it."

"Humph! That isn't anything," the other replied gravely. "You see how they treat their own kind! Just wait until they realize the helplessness of the comparatively few foreigners in China; then—!" His look was significant.

As the two Americans from their point of vantage watched with misgivings the advance of this arrogant, undisciplined force, a carriage drove up one of the narrow, foul-smelling side streets toward the line of march. Too late realizing his error, the driver made an effort to turn about and escape. The sleet-sodden soldiers, seeing an opportunity to escape the weary tramp that lay ahead, broke from the ranks and milled about the carriage, cutting off its retreat. A blow over the head from a clubbed gun in the hands of one of the soldiers knocked the protesting driver from his seat. The doors were torn from their hinges by the frantic efforts of those trying to get inside, the passengers thrust outside and trampled underfoot—the whole appeared like a pack of starving wolves fighting over a carcass. With men swarming over it, fighting to gain a foothold, the carriage finally started, and turning into the street, followed the column, the skinny underfed horse struggling under the unusual load as it was forced along by jabs from a fixed bayonet.

Disgusted with such inhuman actions, and helpless to do anything under the circumstances, the consul and the Naval officer turned away and seated themselves before the stove.

"I hope those weren't foreigners in that carriage," said the consul, "least of all, Americans. The good Lord knows I am having trouble enough trying to get satisfaction for that other incident."

THE other incident which the consul referred to had occurred a few days before, and was very similar in nature to the one just witnessed. An American lady from one of the missions had been roughly hauled from her private carriage, which was commandeered and driven off. Upon protesting against such treatment to some of the others, she was grossly insulted and spat upon.

The consul, upon learning of the incident, had dashed off to see the Tupan, or military governor of the province, and in righteous anger had boldly demanded that restitution be made, and that the soldiers who had committed such a cowardly act be brought to trial and punished. He also demanded that assurances be given that further acts of this character against his countrymen should be discontinued in future. The Tupan courteously promised to do all in his power to comply in the matter, and assured the consul that speedy action would be taken.

It was partly due to the Tupan's delay in meeting with these demands that the destroyer had been hurried to Nanking from Shanghai to lend moral support; and the Naval commander had dropped in at the consulate on his daily visit to learn the latest developments in the case which might have serious and far-reaching consequences.

The consul shifted nervously in his chair.

"Darn that fellow anyway!" he growled. "He's as slippery as an eel. Says that he is doing everything he can to locate those

men, and I know he isn't turning a hand, the lyin' diplomat! Keeps me running back and forth like an errand boy—polite promises that mean nothing, and the men that did the dirty work are with General Ching; and he knows it. We can whistle for them for all the good it will do. I'm not going to have it!" The consul brought his fist down into his palm with a slap, his blue eyes flashing behind the thick lenses. "I'm going to take steps that will make him come across."

The young skipper thrilled to this; it was in accordance with the traditions of the old Navy—the diplomacy of force that he understood so well and appreciated—when action was taken on the spot, and explained months later by letter when the affair had been settled and forgotten. But now—his heart sank—the radio with its instantaneous bridging of oceans and continents, had put a stop to individual action in matters of state, and one needs must get authority before taking matters in his own hands.

"Those good old days," he sighed as he brought his mind back to the problem at hand.

Meeting the consul's determined gaze, he asked dryly:

"You speak of taking steps. Just what steps could you take?"

"Well, your ship is here in the river, isn't it?" the consul answered with some asperity.

"Oh, yes, but the Tupan knows as well as you do—better perhaps—" the skipper continued, a shade of bitterness in his voice—"that we daren't use it. With all due respect, the only thing you can do, so far as I am able to see, is to send a strongly worded despatch to the minister at Peking and hope for authority to do something—which you won't get. The dear folks at home would want us to be gentle and kind under all circumstances. Some way or other, they don't seem to approve of strong-arm methods, regardless of the people we are dealing with, or the provocation."

"Unfortunately, perhaps, I'm afraid you're right," the consul replied thoughtfully. "Still, we're not running the Government, and it's probably just as well that we aren't," he went on, smiling at the skipper. "The Tupan is in a tight fix, and he's doing the best he can under the circumstances—for himself, of course. General Ching is a power hereabouts, and is becoming stronger every day. If he continues his successes down Shanghai way, he will be number one man in this part of China when the war's over. The Tupan doesn't want to get in wrong with him and lose his job—if not his head. So looking at things from his point of view, I can't say that I blame him much for stalling. I'd do the same thing in his place."

"Yes," the consul continued reminiscently, his eyes following the trailing smoke from his pipe, "we're up against a tough proposition here. Foreigners don't enjoy the sanctity that we had a few years ago. Those fellows from the north haven't the respect for us that they had. They've forgotten the lesson learned during the Boxer trouble, and it looks like we shall have to give them another—if we expect to stay here."

The Naval officer leaned forward as he listened eagerly.

"I don't know how to account for it exactly, unless it is that the Russian refugees, starving and destitute, are doing coolie work or anything else they can get in order to keep body and soul together, and losing caste by so doing. Of course, when one white man loses caste out here we all do. They must respect our rights, though; but on the other hand—if we don't insist on it—we might as well get out."

"The whole trouble is," the young skipper broke in impetuously, "there's too much diplomacy and not enough action. Force is the only thing that these fellows understand—or any of us, for that matter. The Yangste, here, is the key to the whole situation. If we were allowed to block it at this point and prevent them ferrying their trains over here from Pukow, the terminal of the only railroad from Peking, we could have all the Tupans, Chings and Chongs just where we want them.

It would be so easy, too," he continued enthusiastically. "I could anchor on the other side of the river near the docks, and blow his yellow-bellied rickshaw pullers and sampan drivers off the map as they came in. He wouldn't last long then, and this trouble would blow over within a week."

"Lord!" he ejaculated fervently after a short pause, "if I only dared do it. But shucks! It would be the same as cutting my throat. They would have me before a general court martial within a week, regardless of whether or not it had the desired effect."

"I'm with you in spirit, Skipper; but as

you say, you couldn't get away with it," the elder man counseled wisely. "But it does make one boil to be tied hand and foot this way, and have to take their insults. Next time I trot around to see the Tupan, I shall drop him a hint that we might have to close the river to him; it may have some effect, but I don't want to make a bluff and have it called."

Laughing at the consul's seriousness, the skipper gave him a comradely slap on the knee as he arose to make his departure.

"Anyway, it won't make a bit of difference a hundred years from now, so don't worry. See you tomorrow," he called, chuckling, his hand on the door-knob.

SUDDENLY the door burst open in his face. He jumped back to avoid its swing, and one of the teachers from the American university dashed past him and in to the room. With his clothing torn and covered with mud, while across his white drawn face two livid welts stood out sharply like saber cuts, he made a dramatic figure.

"Good ——! Doctor, what happened?" cried the consul, springing up in alarm.

"Those Funkien ——s!" the doctor gasped, leaning against the table for support, "beat me up."

The skipper slowly closed the door. With wide, staring eyes, he waited tense, scarcely breathing while the doctor recounted his experience.

"I was taking some bags of coal home in a carriage—had to go for it myself as my coolie was commandeered this morning. The soldiers stopped me and searched the carriage. The cooks, seeing the coal, started to take it away. When I objected, they all jumped on me and pulled me from the carriage. Then they threw me down in the muddy street and held me there while all the coal was taken away."

The doctor was gesticulating wildly with both arms as he continued in righteous anger:

"I told an officer that I was an American, and that I wanted protection. Laughing in my face, he leaned down from his horse and struck me twice across the cheek while I was lying there on the ground, trying to get up from under their dirty feet. He then called to his men as he galloped off, 'Better get away from here before the foreign ——'s soldiers get after us.' The men jumped in to my carriage and drove away with it— —— them!—so I came to tell you about it as soon as I could."

The consul's hands clenched convulsively as though restraining himself with effort.

"Could you recognize the officer if you should see him again?" he asked in a tense voice.

"Yes! Yes,. I'd know him—the dirty skunk!" the doctor flashed hotly. "He was a lieutenant—had this insignia on his shoulder." He traced on a paper with his muddy shaking finger the Chinese character.

After discussing the seriousness of the assault for a few minutes, the doctor started to make his departure.

"I'll see the Tupan about this right away," the consul assured him as he accompanied him to the door.

"It's high time somebody did something! These fellows are growing so overbearing, it isn't safe for a body to go out into the street."

With this parting observation the doctor, growling under his breath, made his way outside.

Smarting under the doctor's implied criticism at the poor protection afforded, the consul returned slowly to his seat near the stove, his chin on his chest.

"Confound them! they've got to stop this sort of thing," he mumbled, glancing toward the skipper who stood tense, a far away look in his eyes, smoothing a piece of paper between his fingers.

Through the young officer's mind were flashing the deeds of dozens of old Naval heroes who had not hesitated to avenge an insult to their country's honor. Neither had they vacillated between duty and consequences to themselves in coming to the aid of a fellow countryman in danger in a foreign land; and he—he, who had been sent there to protect American citizens, was hesitating. His heart cried "Take action!" while his head counseled caution.

Suddenly aware of the consul's sharp scrutiny, his mind came back to the present. Glancing at the piece of paper which he had unconsciously taken from his pocket, he gave a slight start. Looking closer, his heart beat rapidly. A plan had unfolded itself.

He started impulsively forward, intending to take the consul into his confidence, but

stopped short. He decided that it were better that the consul should know nothing of his intentions; so that if blame were to fall he could shoulder all the responsibility.

Returning the paper—a radiogram that he had received that day—to his pocket, he said smilingly as he put on his overcoat—

"Now's the time to take those steps you mentioned a while ago, Consul!"

"I shall talk strong to him, all right," he gritted through clenched teeth as he started pacing up and down the room.

"Don't forget to tell him about stopping the river. It may do some good," and with a "so long," the skipper stepped outside and into his waiting rickshaw.

Setting out for his ship, his determined gaze set straight ahead, he passed unseeing through the maze of hurrying human traffic his plan for the morrow seething through his mind.

THE next morning, the rattle of anchor chains on the windlass broke the gray stillness of the dawn. The only living things that observed her stealthy movements were the flocks of wild ducks that protested sleepily at being disturbed; paddling leisurely from her path as the destroyer moved swiftly and silently through the haze to the Pukow side of the Yangste's yellow flood.

With a muzzle-loading howitzer which might have been cast in the time of Confucius mounted in the bow of their sampan, the Chinese river-police, making their early morning inspection of the waterfront, paddled close as if to investigate the presence of the man-of-war on the Pukow side. But seeing the grim face of its commander peering at them from the bridge, and noting the business-like preparations going on about her decks, they apparently decided to defer their curiosity and hastily sheered off, the swift current carrying their ridiculous craft quickly downstream.

Ignoring the raw, piercing wind sweeping down from the barren steppes of the Gobi Desert, the skipper kept the bridge. With glasses clutched in his hand, he walked nervously from one side to the other, every sense alert. Pulling the worn radiogram from his pocket, he read for the thousandth time—

British Admiral Shuttleworth on His Majesty's naval yacht *Dauntless* passed Hankow at 8 A. M., en route Shanghai.

"That ought to put him here about nine o'clock," he murmured, "the same time the train is due from Peking. I hope the cursed thing is on time for once."

Looking toward the docks a short distance on his quarter, his eyes narrowed and his jaw shut with a snap.

"I'm going to carry it out, admiral or no admiral. I'm here to protect Americans, and I'm going to do it even if I do get a court martial," he muttered, sniffing defiance to all fear of punishment for doing his duty as he saw it. "If we won't look out for our own people, it's a cinch nobody else will!"

"Yes, sir!" echoed his executive officer who had at that moment come on to the bridge.

Turning quickly, surprized that he had spoken his thoughts aloud, the skipper added:

"Yes! And there are several nations I could name that wouldn't shed any tears to see us run out of China." To which the executive again agreed.

One bell struck. The skipper gave a nervous start at the sound.

"Phew!" he smiled grimly, "eight-thirty!"

His eyes sweeping the line of hills behind Pukow, he detected a hazy cloud of smoke along the skyline. Focusing his glasses carefully, he rested them on the bridge-rail and watched intently for some minutes. The troop train from Peking, in two sections, was in sight.

Trembling, he took a quick look about the decks. Seeing that everything was in readiness, the guns trained out and ammunition up, he now turned his attention to the river.

"Gosh!" he sighed longingly. "I never before wanted so much to see a Limey ship. I hope he gets here on time!" he added, thinking of the admiral.

The trains, creeping slowly down the steep slopes, struck the level valley. With a burst of speed and tooting whistles, they came puffing in to the station at Pukow.

Scarcely had they stopped when hundreds of gray-clad, sheepskin-capped troops swarmed from the coaches. With bayonets glittering in the sunlight, they drifted down the dock and began embarking leisurely into the fleet of sampans and barges that were to ferry them across to the Nanking side of the river.

The skipper watched their every movement. The minutes passed. The sampans were being filled rapidly and would

soon shove off. The stage was set—but one of the actors about whom the plot hinged was missing.

Almost in despair, his hands trembling, the skipper leveled his glasses for a final look up river. His heart jumped to his throat—for around the bend came the *Dauntless*, and flying gayly from her foretopmast head was the white, red-crossed flag of the British admiral.

HIS breath coming quickly, the skipper dashed across the bridge and roared into the voice tube the order—

"Commence firing!"

The gun crews, standing alertly by, not sure what it was all about, leaped to their stations. The brass powder cases were slammed home, and the breech plugs closed with vicious snaps as the two bow guns went into action, one after the other.

At the roar of the black powder charges, huge sheets of flame and clouds of smoke belched from the gun muzzles, pointed fair at the startled soldiers in the crowded sampans, but a few hundred feet away. There followed a moment of hesitant uncertainty, then excited cries. Then, as though certain in their minds that the "foreign ——'s" ship was firing on them, they acted as one.

Regardless of the danger from capsizing the boats, deaf to the screamed commands of their officers, their only thought being to get away from this "bad joss" as quickly as possible, the untrained soldiers in a frenzy of fear threw caution to the winds and made a wild rush for the dock.

Discarding rifles and equipment, trampling their fellows under foot in the fight for first place, the disorganized mob stampeded like a flock of sheep before wolves and tore madly up the dock toward the station, while the guns on the destroyer roared out their shots one after the other with sharp regularity.

Some, knocked overboard in the wild rush, struggled in the water, swimming desperately for safety; others, trapped in the barges and sampans that had broken adrift, made frantic efforts with anything at their command, to row the unwieldy craft near the shore as the current carried them swiftly downstream.

The skipper chuckled gleefully as he watched their ignominious flight.

"You will beat up Americans, will you, you yalla ——s?"

With screaming whistles, both trains got under way, and started back up country, leaving a few stragglers, who followed at their best speed on foot. The dock and waterfront was deserted.

"Cease firing!" the skipper ordered. "Well, that's that," he remarked nervously to no one in particular, and taking a deep breath, added, "Now for the boomerang!"

Meanwhile, the consul was furiously punishing his office rug; his angry footsteps shaking the house as he figuratively gnashed his teeth in his helplessness. His visit to the Tupan's *lungwha*, or official residence, after the Naval officer's departure the evening before, had been fruitless.

That august personage, so the consul had been informed, had left the city suddenly, but would probably return on the morrow. Stating his grievance to the minister of foreign affairs, and leaving a note for the Tupan, he returned to the consulate. Calling again early the next morning, he was politely dismissed with the promise that he would be notified of the Tupan's return.

Thoroughly angered by this Oriental subterfuge, but incapable of doing anything further until the Tupan should consent to seeing him, the consul sent a despatch to his minister at Peking, in which he outlined the American doctor's experience, and recommended that some drastic step be taken at the earliest possible moment.

Just now he was impatiently waiting for something to happen that would clear the atmosphere; but the turn of events, when it did come, was so totally different from what he had anticipated, that it found him unprepared.

The forenoon passed on leaden feet. The consul, to whom all his fellow countrymen looked for protection and the championing of their rights and privileges, suffered the agony of impotence as he paced nervously up and down like a lion in a cage.

WORN, heartsick and weary, he finally sat down to a late tiffin. Without appetite he sat gazing sightlessly at his empty plate when the doorbell rang a peremptory summons. His number one boy came excitedly into the dining room.

"Big general wancha see consul. Him say velly important!"

With a scowl on his face, not sure whether he should grant an audience under the circumstances, the consul reluctantly went into the room where his visitor waited, and greeted him coldly.

The Tupan's chief-of-staff, palpably nervous and excited, stood heroically in the middle of the room, one hand grasping his bejeweled sword-hilt. In precise English, as if it had been carefully memorized, he delivered his message.

"The Tupan regrets," he began, "that your Excellency's warship has blocked the river and fired upon his troops without giving warning to a friendly power that has held your Excellency and the great country that you represent in the highest esteem."

"He also wishes me to inform your Excellency," the general continued, "that after the most diligent and careful search, the men who insulted the honorable American missionary lady, and the honorable doctor, have been found and were executed at noon today."

The consul listened as one in a trance, not sure in his mind that he had heard aright, staring hard at the general.

"The Tupan respectfully requests, since he has met with all your Excellency's demands, that your Excellency will see fit to direct that your warship return to its anchorage, and leave the river free for the passage of his troops."

As the general concluded, the consul, his mind a riot of emotions, could only nod assent and return the deep bow of his caller as he backed from the room and made his departure.

"Great ——!" he breathed aghast, dropping into a chair and wiping the cold sweat from his forehead with trembling hand. "That impetuous young fool with his destroyer has certainly raised ——!" "Why in heaven's name did he do this thing without telling me something about it? Confound it! I'll have a nice time explaining this to the State Department."

And thinking of the Naval officer and his bold step in defiance to all authority, he added grimly:

"And —— only knows what punishment he'll get."

"He did get action, though," the consul was forced to chuckle hollowly in spite of himself. "But what a mess he has let me in for with his hair-brained scheme."

"I must investigate and make a report to the Minister," he muttered finally, jumping to his feet.

Ordering his carriage, he set out hurriedly for the waterfront, impatient at the slow pace of the galloping horses as they clattered down the narrow street.

In sight of the river, the consul could see the destroyer near the docks on the Pukow side of the river, watchful and grim against the dark background.

Springing from the carriage, the consul dashed across the bund and into a waiting sampan. With the coolies straining at the oars, he was quickly sculled across the current and alongside the destroyer's gangway.

The skipper, after the long period of anxiety, stood at the head of the gangway, eagerly watching the consul's approach. One look at his drawn, haggard face and his worst fears were realized.

"Something went wrong," he gulped, swallowing hard.

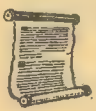
"Good lord, man! what were you thinking about, anyway?" the consul greeted him in accusing tones as he reached the deck. "Why in the world didn't you tell me that you intended doing this foolhardy thing?"

The skipper's knees seemed to crumple under him. Wetting his dry lips, he asked half audibly—

"Wh—what happened?"

The consul told him of the visit he had received from the Tupan's chief of staff, and the message that he brought.

"Then us Americans won't lose face on the deal!" the skipper interrupted exultantly, as nervously fumbling in his pocket, he handed the other a radio message received earlier in the day from the British admiral on the *Dauntless*.



THE consul read at a glance—

Thanks awfully for the salute. Sorry we could not return it, but this ship is not fitted with saluting guns.

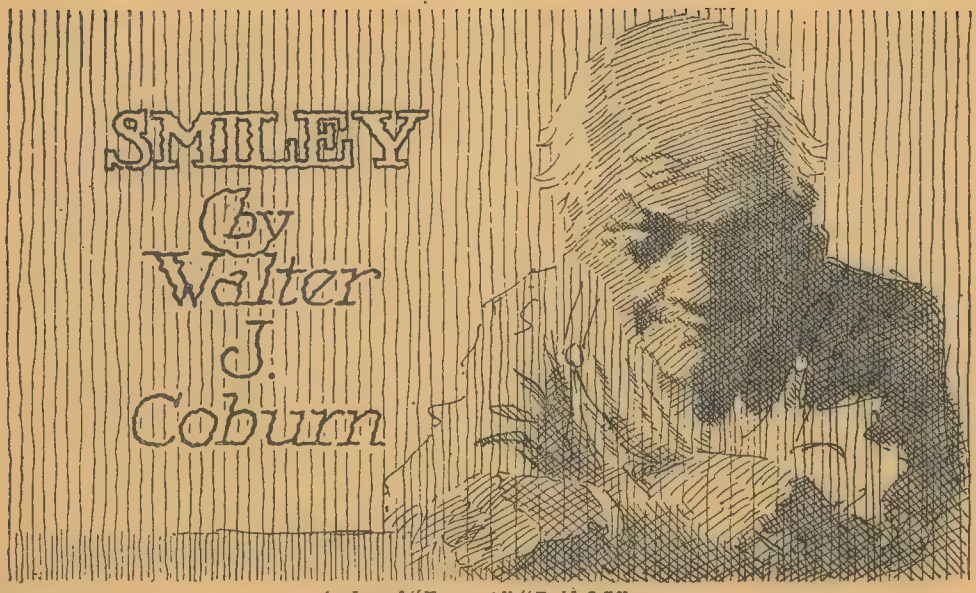
Blinking his eyes, he looked up incredulously.

"Yes," the skipper explained, trying to appear matter of fact, "we aren't supposed to fire salutes, either, but under the circumstances thought that we might stretch a point in the way of international courtesies. The Admiral's a decent sort; thought we might as well come over here to fire it."

"Black powder saluting charges!" the consul gasped. "Well I'll be teetotally ——ed!"

# SMILEY

## By Walter J. Coburn



*Author of "Freezout," "Paid Off," etc.*

IT IS doubtful whether any one in Bunch Grass, Montana, even now, can tell you his real name. At the time when he drifted into the little cow town he played so minor a part in the general scheme of things that his name did not matter. It was about the time of year when the big outfits are making their last shipment of steers to Chicago and nobody had time to pay much attention to the mild-mannered, poorly clad little old tramp that fate, in the guise of an ill-tempered brakie, threw from a box-car into their midst.

He had been in town a week before any one got sober enough to notice him. Then Dutch Louie's swamper died of delirium tremens and Louie's liquor-bleared eye fell on the newcomer who smiled back inoffensively.

"Hey, 'Smiley'" he rumbled in his thick bass. "Run mit this tray of beer to Big Casino's. Tell her you take Pete's place because Pete iss dead und can't come. She runs the dance hall acrost the alley."

By the end of the week, when the last rollicking cowpuncher had emptied his gun at the stars and bucked his town horse down the main street on to the sagebrush flat beyond, Smiley had become a fixture.

Unobtrusive, willing, quiet from the time of his morning's morning until he slept off his mild jag in the "snake room" behind Louie's place, some time next morning, nobody ever heard Smiley speak out of turn. Smiley made an ideal swamper.

He ate at the Chinaman's and slept on an empty poker table or in a chair. Somehow, he managed to shave every morning and his overalls and blue shirt were never soiled. Louie's bartender, who wanted to be a barber, cut Smiley's sparse crop of snow-white hair. Big Casino used to complain that he would not accept a tip.

Then came one of Montana's hardest winters, and Bunch Grass, hidden under its white blanket, missed the laughing, fighting, cussing, big hearted cowpunchers from the big outfits. Most of the tin-horns, tiring of monotonous solitaire, moved south. Big Casino closed her dance hall and helped Doc Beale fight the small-pox epidemic that hit the 'breed camps along Milk River.

Dutch Louie, Smiley and the barn man played coon can or pitch during the long winter evenings. Now and then a sheep herder blew into town, lasted a few weeks, and was loaded on the stage and sent back to work.

Smiley located a deserted cabin along the river bank and started batching there. He drove Doc Beale's buggy team on long trips while the overworked doctor slept, wrapped in a buffalo robe. He cut wood for anybody that would hire him. Half the morning fires in Bunch Grass were built, at two bits a throw, by Smiley. Sometimes he helped

Big Casino nurse her small-pox patients. With pick and shovel he dug graves in the frozen ground, fashioned pine board coffins and shoveled the frozen sod in on top of the unfortunate man, woman or child that had died of the malady. When Antoine La Frombois' baby died, Smiley preached a sermon to ease the mind of Antoine's squaw, who had picked up religion somewhere.

In this manner passed the winter and no one knew Smiley any better than they did that day when Louie hired him.

The ice on Milk River broke up during the latter part of April. Buds began to show on the wild-rose bushes and cottonwoods. Signs of life showed at the prairie-dog town on Alkali Flat. A 'breed claimed he saw a bear track along the river bank. Old Man Simm's rheumatism was acting oddly and Bunch Grass 'lowed that spring had come.

When Rafe Tucker, the sheriff, pulled the neverslip shoes off of his winter horse, it was a sure sign that the time had come to shed the fleece-lined underwear and swap your muskrat cap for a Stetson.

The cattle were being driven out of their winter quarters in the bad-lands now. In groups of two and three, bearded, frost bitten cow-hands from various line camps drifted into town with a check for their winter wages in their pockets.

Dutch Louie, guided by wisdom gleaned from ten years behind the bar, planted sufficient money in his little safe to cash the checks of the thirsty invaders. Then he quit working a fourteen-hour shift and sent to Helena for a bartender who could drink while on shift and make correct change. Louie, during the rush season, worked the night shift himself.

During this rush season, before the spring round-up began, it was Louie's custom to eat breakfast at five o'clock every morning. The swamper presided over the liquor-stained mahogany from five till six, when the day man came on shift. This was the slack hour when the night's revelers had retired and the day customers were not yet abroad. Save for an occasional freighter leaving town, or some cowpuncher calling for a quart to take along to shorten his long trail home, there was no trade.

To Smiley, however, polishing glasses on the back bar, it was the great hour of the day. Clad in snowy apron, a drink or two to take the shake out of his hands, he assumed an air of dignity that bordered on the sublime. His shuffling gait gave way to semi-springy step, his smile took on a real meaning and there was a joyous light in his pale blue eyes. A gleam that rivaled the polish of the glassware on the back bar.

When Dutch Louie had shed his bar-apron, tossed off a stiff whisky, washed and adjusted his toupee in the bar mirror, he locked the till and went across the street to the Chinaman's. This was Smiley's cue to enact his pitiful bit of conceit.

He would place several glasses and a bottle on the bar, then lean across to chat with a group of imaginary customers, carrying on a one-sided conversation in a whisky-hoarse tone.

"Drink up, gents," he would smile. "And the next will be on the house. How's that? Yes, stranger, she's a neat little place. All mine and paid for, too. Will I get in on this round? Don't mind if I do. A little Bourbon, to steddy my hand a mite. Them wool buyers got to buyin' wine last night and I like to went under. Which reminds me of the story about the shoe drummer and the Irishman named Pat."

Smiley would tell the story of the shoe drummer and the Irishman named Pat, then take another drink when he had recovered from his silent mirth. His imaginary clientele included all of Bunch Grass from the élite who lived on the south side of the track and seldom entered Louie's, to the north side sheepherder, cowpuncher and moocher trade.

ONE morning, about five thirty, Rafe Tucker dropped in unexpectedly to get his spurs which he had left there the previous evening. He came in the side entrance and Smiley, unaware of the sheriff's presence, was in the midst of his anecdote when Rafe sneezed.

Most men would have laughed, or at least grinned at the swamper's red-eared embarrassment. But Rafe did not even smile.

"Mornin', Smiley," he said gravely, and poured a drink into an empty glass belonging to one of Smiley's imaginary customers. "Better git in on this."

Like a small boy caught playing with his sister's doll, Smiley obeyed in agonized silence. For three days afterward, he waited for the dreaded "hoorawing" that

did not come from Louie's boisterous patrons. From then on he racked his brain for a plan to repay Rafe for his silence.

"That Rafe Tucker," he confided to Big Casino later, "is my idee of a honest-to-God gentleman."

She wondered at the time why Smiley turned so red, then forgot to take back the trayful of empty glasses.

The "Merry Xmas" done with soap on the bar mirror was replaced by green mosquito netting. Summer had come. Freight wagons loaded with cases of beer left weekly for the mining camps in the Little Rockies. The town was sprinkled with cowpunchers that were let out at the close of the spring round-up and refused to pitch hay during the slack season preceding the autumn beef work. The tin-horns were reaping a fair harvest from the shearing crews and wool buyers. Brawls were so common that Smiley, timid as he was, became accustomed to the sight of blood. Bunch Grass, north of the track, was in its fiddle-squeaking, laughing, cussing, fighting glory.

Half a dozen games were running full blast in Dutch Louie's. Smiley shuffled countless miles every night carrying drinks to the card rooms. Louie was making good money from percentage and drinks. Blondie, the heavy, flat-footed bartender, was making the most of his many opportunities and by short-change and hold-out methods was doubling his wages daily.

"Only that a good bartender is so scarce as rattlesnake ears, I'd sink a bung-starter acrost his head and can him," Louie told Rafe Tucker. "He's a crook. A *verdamter schweinhund* and a polecat, Rafe."

"You hired him, Louie. Kill him er keep him, it don't make no big difference. Now if Smiley had a mite more experience—?"

"He ain't slick enough. Mit a small crowd, *ja*. But he can't handle a big line-up, Rafe, und do his own bouncin'. A —— good swamper, but no bartender. A little *schnapps*, eh?"

"A little red-eye, thanks. Who's them two new tin-horns that come in last night on the Westbound? One little rat faced gent and his pardner's a hard-lookin' gent that looks like a prize fighter."

"Jockey Ross and Kid Welch from Chicago oder New York or some place. Tough sports, them two."

That was the evening before Louie jabbed himself with the ice pick and woke up the next morning with a touch of blood-poison. He worked half his shift that night and would have gone till morning if Doc Beale hadn't come in.

"It's bed for you, Louie, or we measure you for a pine box, Where's Blondie?"

"At Wong Pong's."

"Eating noodles?"

"Smokin' hop."

"A smoker, eh? Then it's up to Smiley to dish out the fire-water. It's half past two anyhow and the night rush is over. He can handle the card tables and the few that are still able to chin the bar. Shove your bankroll in the safe and turn in."

When Doc gave orders in that quick, nervous tone, men obeyed. Smiley, white-aproned and trembling with excitement, was placed behind the bar and Doc took Louie home in his top buggy.

One game of stud and two draw games were going. Four sheep-shearers leaned on the bar and argued drunkenly about blades, machine plants, wool and the Oregon clip.

At the other end of the bar two cowpunchers were out-lying one another in maudlin fashion.

An easy enough crowd to handle. Smiley set up a round of drinks, a customary procedure when a fresh bartender goes on shift. When he carried the trays of drinks to the three tables, several of the players greeted him with a patronizing grin.

A look passed between Jockey Ross and Kid Welch. A look that Smiley accidently intercepted.

Once more behind the bar, the little old drink dispenser tried to deduct the meaning of that look between the gamblers. Then a jostling, laughing group pushed through the swinging doors and Smiley had a busy half hour. When he had time to look around once more, the two tin-horns had cashed in their losers' stacks and disappeared.

"Not enough suckers in the game to suit them two leeches," Smiley told himself. "Louie won't let 'em play for the house and they don't make no dough cappin'. Cheap sports. Hope they hook a rattler and blow the town. We don't need bums like them."

He bought another drink for the crowd at the bar and took a stiff one himself. His step seemed more springy now and his face took on a slight flush of excitement.

His first real shift! No king ascending his long sought throne felt more proud than old

Smiley as his benign smile swept the line of customers.

Fifteen men at the bar and three tables going! His pale eyes danced like blue flames.

"Drink up, gents, and have one on the house!" His tone was not the mild, scarcely audible one of Smiley, the swamper. It had taken on an odd imitation of Louie's hearty bass. True, his hands trembled a bit and his attitude was awkward when he leaned across the polished bar to chat during a momentary lull.

Then a sheepman from Beaver Creek dropped in with two wool buyers and the day clerk from the Cowboy's Home. A swift half hour of buying followed. Smiley's face had grown two shades redder. Then he found himself telling the story of the shoe drummer and the Irishman named Pat!

The story brought a roar of laughter and Smiley's eyes suddenly met those of Rafe Tucker.

Smiley's jaw dropped. Was Rafe laughing at the story or at him? Would this sheriff, who had a reputation as a local wag, tell these men about that fateful morning?

"Evenin', Smiley." Rafe's words came to the miserable Smiley as from a great distance. "I'm right glad tuh see yuh where yuh belong. Yuh make a shore pleasant change after that buckskin-haired Blondie. I'll take a little red-eye, Smiley, tuh drink yore health."

Smiley gulped hard and tried to say something but his vocal cords seemed suddenly paralyzed. Tears stood in his eyes as he pushed Rafe's proffered money back across the bar.

"I'm—you're—I'm thankin' yuh, Rafe. Yore money's counterfeit while I'm on shift."

"Better be careful I don't take yuh up on that," laughed Rafe. "It's comin' election time an' I'm campaignin', yuh know."

After a few minutes, Rafe went out the back way.

"The whitest man in the country," Smiley told the crowd.

"Rafe's a good feller and a top-notch sheriff," agreed the sheepman. "But it'll be a close run between him and Bob Brown. There's a heap of folks on the south side uv the tracks that think Rafe's too easy about what goes on over here on the north side. He don't make enough arrests. I've heard it said that Rafe's too old fer the job. Got soft an' sorter lost his nerve. Others says he's drinkin' too much."

"It's a —— lie!" Smiley exploded. "Rafe's got nerve and plenty of it."

"Sure thing," agreed the sheepman. "But them fools won't believe it unless he proves it."

"Plumb correct," agreed a cowpuncher. "A nice, neat killin', now, an' Rafe'd win hands down. Bob wouldn't have a chanct."

Some one brought a drink. Smiley, washing glasses in the wooden tub behind the bar, glanced carelessly toward the window.

As he did so a face that had been pressed against the pane was jerked quickly away. But not quick enough to prevent Smiley from recognizing the smooth-shaven, heavy jowled countenance of Blondie—Blondie, pasty white and his sleek hair disarranged.

Smiley, a quiet, closem-outhed sort, was more observant that Bunch Grass credited him with being. He knew Blondie's habits. Knew that the big bartender should be at Wong Pong's sleeping off his "smoke." Smiley was gripped by a nameless fear. Something was wrong. Why was Blondie on the street at this early hour of the morning after a hard shift? Why had Blondie jerked his head back so suddenly, to avoid recognition?

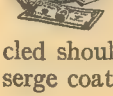
One of the card games was breaking up now and the players surged to the bar, giving Smiley no further time for idle speculation.

The house gambler passed Smiley a thick roll of bills and a stack of chips.

"The roll," he explained. "Count it. And here's the percentage money. One thousand and fifty bucks in all. I'm going out to scoff."

Smiley counted the money and put it in the till. Then a sensation akin to an electric shock swept his old frame. He was responsible for this money!

He broke out in a cold sweat. Twice, during the next five minutes, he made wrong change for the men at the bar. Then the other two dealers passed him their bankrolls. Something over five thousand dollars now bulged the pocket of Smiley's overalls.



SAVE for three very drunk sheepshearers, the saloon was empty. Then, through the front door came Kid Welch, his thick-muscled shoulders bulging under a sleazy blue serge coat. There was a loose grin on the

ex-prize fighter's lips and his slits of eyes fastened on Smiley with a cold stare that made the old fellow sick with dread.

Smiley's mood of good fellowship and careless hospitality now gave way to cringing fear. His smile was a pitiful mockery. His knees felt as if they might give way at any moment.

Always, throughout his whole life, Smiley had avoided physical violence. Always, when fights started, he slipped away to hide the abject cowardice that made him a trembling, pasty-faced wreck.

"Have—have one on the house." Smiley's voice sounded faint to his own ears. Faint and quavering. He was making a desperate effort to hold those three drunken sheep-shearers. Somehow he knew that when they left, Kid Welch would do something. If only Rafe would come!

"Large night, ain't it?" Welch's face leaned across the bar, leering at him. Fascinated, hypnotized, poor old Smiley nodded. He saw the heavy jaw, the twisting, tobacco-stained lips, the flat, broken nose above a row of gold teeth, And from under scarred brows, Welch's narrow eyes.

"Yo're spillin' that booze all over, pal," said Welch. "Set down the bottle and give us the one about the shoe drummer and the Irishman named Pat. I only got the first part of it before. Let's have it, then these three guys can go to bed."

Smiley looked about, like a trapped rabbit. His glance took in the front window, blackish gray in the first light of dawn. Against the glass, white and flabby, showed the face of Blondie. It was like some horrible nightmare. Perhaps—perhaps, if he could hide the money—.

It took every ounce of will power he possessed to force a smile to his bloodless lips. Yet, somehow, he managed it.

"Let's down this drink, boys. Then I'll spin the yarn." He tossed off a big drink that was tasteless in his stiff throat.

"Wait till I shut the back door," he managed to say. "Draught from it's ketchin' me atween the shoulders."

"Sure." Welch's grin widened.

To Smiley, lead-footed and weak-kneed, it seemed miles to that door. His shaking hand was on the knob now. Then the door of the rear card room swung slowly open and Smiley saw Jockey Ross seated at a table playing solitaire. A nasty smile twitched at the corners of Ross's thin-lipped mouth. Smiley turned the knob but the door would not open.

"Somebody locked it," Ross volunteered carelessly. "Odd, ain't it? If I was you, gran'pa, I'd leave it stay locked, see?"

"Yes." Smiley's voice was barely audible. He felt like screaming, but knew that his voice had left him. The palms of his hands were wet with perspiration and he inanely wiped them on his apron. Then, at a small rear window he saw a face. A blood-smeared, ghastly face. Rafe Tucker's face. And Rafe's finger across the jagged cut lips in a signal for silence.

His heart was pounding against his ribs so hard that old Smiley was certain that Jockey Ross heard it. Had Ross seen Rafe at the window? He reckoned not. The window was not visible from the doorway of the card room. Smiley dragged his heavy feet past the open door, followed by Ross's rat eyes. Now he was behind the bar again, looking at Kid Welch's ugly face.

Welch glanced at the clock, then at Smiley. The three sheep-shearers were singing now, their arms about one another's shoulders.

"I'm blowin' this burg in half an hour, see. Say your little piece about Pat. I'd hate like —— to leave here without hearin' it. Them three drunks is walkin' out on ya."

Welch spoke the truth. They were weaving a course toward the front door. Sick to the point of nausea, Smiley saw them leave. Then he remembered Rafe and the memory of the sheriff gave him a little courage. Rafe, with his face battered to a pulp, hair matted across his forehead. Rafe had cautioned him to silence. His cue, then, was to hold Kid Welch in conversation. He knew that the Eastbound was due in half an hour. It did not ordinarily stop, but Smiley guessed that Welch had planned to flag it. He would put off holding the saloon up until almost train time. Jockey Ross guarding the back door, Blondie on watch in front. It would be Blondie that would flag the train.

"Another little shot first, eh, Kid?" he suggested.

"Don't care if I do. You look like you needed a jolt. Got a chill?"

"Yeah." Smiley swallowed a highball glass full of liquor and felt the tingle of the fiery stuff as it "hit his toes."

Then, measuring every word, Smiley told the story of the shoe drummer and the

Irishman named Pat. Not because he feared the weight of Welch's broken-knuckled hand, not because he was afraid to die, but because Rafe Tucker, the whitest man in the world was depending on him.

The color was coming back into Smiley's cheeks. His voice was losing its pitifully weak note. His smile was the old smile that he had worn during the earlier part of the evening. Some strange transformation was taking place inside his timid heart. He scarcely saw the battered face of his listener. He was enacting his little bit of vanity. This place with its glitter of polished glassware and array of bottles was his own. He was the genial host, amusing his customers with idle jest. His pale eyes were fever-bright. Where his thin white hair met his temples blue veins stood out like crooked cords.

Crouched outside in the dim light of dawn, Rafe Tucker listened. He but half knew what it was costing that white-haired old man behind the bar, for Rafe had never known cowardice in its most terrible guise. The sort of cowardice that makes jibbering, cringing things of human flesh.

He only knew that Smiley had caught his signal and was doing his bit. Rafe's gun scabbard was empty. He was weak and sick and dizzy from the terrific beating that Kid Welch had dealt him, after his blackjack had struck the sheriff's head in a cowardly, unexpected blow under the shadow of darkness as Rafe stepped outside. They had left him for dead. Unarmed, the odds three to one and each of those three armed and desperate, he weighed his chances. Smiley, he knew, could not be counted on in a fight. He dared not leave the place lest they rob the old man and escape. He watched Blondie, his big bulk leaning against the log wall of the saloon, and saw the bartender take a shot of dope. Then, a mile up the track, the whistle of the Eastbound.

Blondie quit his post and walked toward the track, an unlighted railroad lantern in his hand. The moment had come.

Smiley, finishing his anecdote, heard the train whistle. It came like a dash of icy water on a sleeping man.

"Haw, haw," chuckled Kid Welch softly, and shoved a blue-barreled gun in Smiley's twitching face. "Good story, pal. Lift the mitts. Then ——!"

Smiley had suddenly dropped as if shot. Welch leaped the bar, gun raised to crash against the other man's skull.

With a rush Rafe was across the room, over the bar and on top of Welch. Jockey Ross's bullet ripped a gash in Rafe's shoulder as he leaped.

Smiley's crumpled form lay under Welch's bulk. Welch lay in an oddly sprawling position, making twitching, feeble movements. Rafe grabbed the gun from the thick hand and fired at Ross, who was running for the front door. With a twisting, stumbling movement, Ross dropped to lie face downward on the floor.

Rafe, dragging the heavy form of Kid Welch from on top of Smiley, now saw why Welch had lain so quiet. A twelve-inch ice pick, needle sharp, was buried to its wooden handle in the ex-prize fighter's heart. Rafe loosened Smiley's gnarled old fingers from the bloody handle and lifted the old man's limp form in his arms.

"Fainted," grunted Rafe, "The pore lil ol' game son-of-a-gun has done fainted like a school gal."

IT TOOK all Doc Beale's skill and Big Casino's most careful nursing to bring old Smiley back from the edge of the Long Shadows. Rafe quit electioneering to sit by the old fellow's bedside and talk to him. Doc swore it was Rafe's careless banter that saved Smiley's life.

"Nothing in the world wrong with him physically, Rafe," Doc told him. "Not a scratch on him. It's just a terrible shock to an extremely sensitive nervous system. Puzzling, ——ed if it isn't."

Rafe made no reply. He was beginning to understand more of old Smiley's heart. The heart of a child that is afraid of the dark and can be mortally hurt by ridicule. A heart that, when the great test came, became the heart of a hero.

Rafe Tucker was elected by a big majority, and the sheriff knew that he owed his job as well as his life to old Smiley.

A month later Big Casino wheeled Smiley down the street in a rickety wheel chair, for the old boy was still too weak to walk far. When they came to the log saloon, she pointed to the new sign above the door.

"SMILEY'S PLACE."

"I—I reckon it's a dream, ma'am."

Chuckling until her heavy frame shook

like gelatine, she picked Smiley up and carried him through the door.

A roar that shook the building greeted them. Bunch Grass, north and south of the tracks, was there. There was cheering and laughing and the mayor led the well known—

"Hail, hail, the gang's all here!"

"But," the old fellow smiled through the tears that coursed down his seamed cheek, "I don't understand. Saloons don't grow on bushes."

"Tell him, Rafe," laughed Dutch Louie, who was leaving that night for his beloved Milwaukee.

"There was a reward on Kid Welch fer two thousand dollars," Rafe told him. "We figgered we'd surprize yuh by buyin' Louie out with it. He knocked a thousand offen the price fer what yuh done fer him. Satisfied, ol' war hoss?"

"Is he?" shouted Big Casino, who was sobbing like a paid mourner. "Look at them tears of his if yuh don't think he's tickled."

"He ain't never tuh know," Rafe whispered to Dutch Louie, "that there wa'n't so much as two-bits reward on Kid Welch. It'll go hard with any gent that tells that ol' feller we passed the hat fer the dough that bought yuh out at a —— low price, Louie."

Louie nodded and blew his nose hard.

"Oder, that you told on him that business of talking to people that ain't mit him. Gott, und when you come to the part about the ice pick, it rained yellow-back money, Rafe. Und even Deafy Jones who never heard a word of the speech, was cryin' mit the others."

"Smiley," grinned Rafe, and the old fellow winked back at the sheriff, "Tell us the story of the shoe drummer and the Irishman named Pat. Doc an' the mayor ain't heard it!"

# THE STUFF OF FILIBUSTERS

**by Eugene Cunningham**

WHEN Walker had surrendered to Commander Davis of the United States Navy, two of his veteran officers, Major Swingle of the Artillery and Colonel Rogers, the Commissary-General, settled in California, and each amassed a small fortune. Major Swingle was Colonel Rogers' father-in-law, and until the former's death their relation was very close.

Louis Jack Rogers, Colonel Rogers' son, says that in his last days Major Swingle was tortured by rheumatism, and Colonel Rogers made daily trips from Oakland to San Francisco to visit him and reminisce of the Nicaraguan campaign of a half-century before.

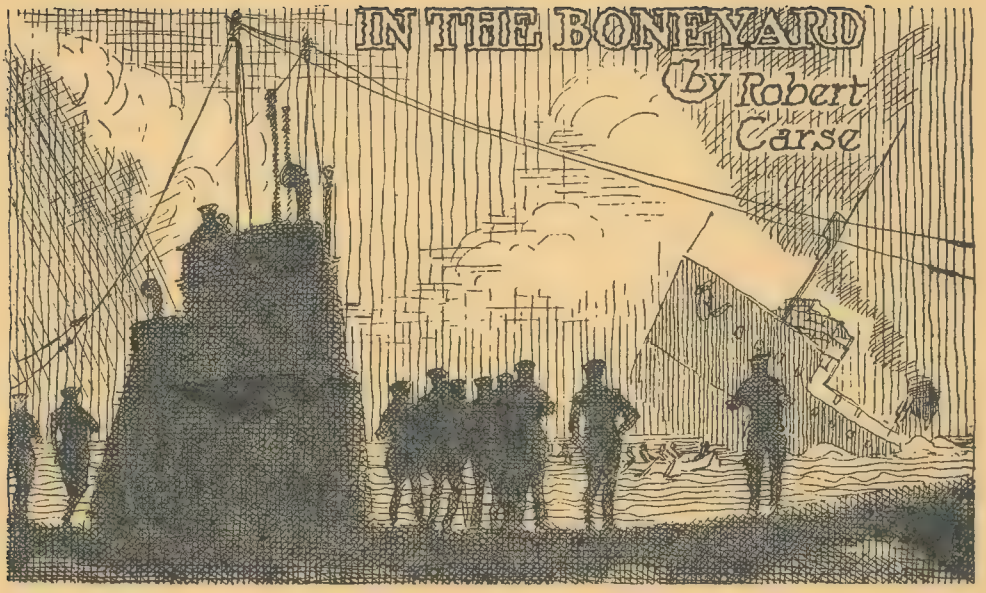
One morning, Colonel Rogers' daughter noted her father leaving the house very stealthily, bearing a paper-wrapped package. His actions aroused her suspicions and she asked what he carried. He returned evasive answers, until she snatched the bundle from him and opened it.

There was Colonel Rogers' old cap-and-ball Colt, "Walker" model, which had many a notch from Nicaraguan days. It was cleaned until it shone; it was oiled; it was loaded—though where he had found percussion caps for it remained a mystery.

He was taking it to Major Swingle. Why? Well, the Major asked him to. For what? Well, he—he wanted it. Why? Well, if a snip of a girl *had* to know, the poor old —— was lying there in bed, in constant agony from his rheumatism. He couldn't get better; he knew it, the doctors knew it; anybody with any sense would know it at a glance. The end was only a matter of months, but months of torture. So he'd asked Colonel Rogers to bring him a gun and let him decently end the business.

Why, what was wrong with that? Colonel Rogers thought it quite right and proper. Certainly it was! Much better to go out quickly and painlessly, with a .47 bullet through his head, than to lie there like an old cow, dying by inches. Wrong? Oh—exclamation points! This weak-kneed generation gave the Colonel a pain where it hurt worst! Afraid to face a bullet—Antonym for Paradise! If *they* had been in Nicaragua with Walker, he supposed they'd have heaved spuds at the enemy!

And it was necessary to set a nurse on guard at Major Swingle's bedside, to keep those two tottering, but ferocious, old Redshirts of Destiny from conspiring and moving to defeat the rheumatism.




*Author of "The Kid," "The Fate of the Flying Fish," etc.*

A NIGHT of white witchery as the moon frosted the river, glinting with soft silver on the ice cakes grinding downstream. "Stumpy" Guinan's boots crunched on the cinders of the road-bed as he limped over the ties between the slim steel ribbons of the rails. He halted for a moment, fumbled his pipe from the upper pocket of his pea-coat and plunked down his potato-sack full of groceries. He pushed his woolen watch-cap over his eyebrows, swung up the sack and, with a groaning curse, gritted forward once more.

Stumpy Guinan was ship-tender of the "boneyard" and had been into town for his week's supply of groceries. He had missed the evening trip of the hand-car propelled by the section-gang, which would have carried him to his destination, where the disused ships cluttered the little cove, and had been forced to take his groceries "on the hump" and walk the seven miles back from town. From his right knee down Stumpy's leg was made of wood, and the seven slow miles over the ties had made the point of juncture between flesh and artificial limb ache and burn.

His pipe upthrust from the corner of his mouth, the stocky ship-tender crunched painfully down the last curve of his journey where the tracks swung around the indentation of the cove holding the ships. Stumpy twitched the potato-sack higher on his shoulder and started down the steep path from the railroad embankment to the shore of the cove.

Standing darkly in profile in the sheer radiance of the moonlight a man looked out over the ice-swirl of the river and the shabby ranks of ships. He was poised on the lower edge of the embankment and swung around at the grit of Stumpy's tread in the cinders.

"What d' ya say, stranger?" asked Stumpy around his pipe stem. The stranger lifted a round face in the moon-radiance, examining the gnome-like figure of the ship-tender.

"Good evening, good evening! I have stopped my journey for a short while to look at these dying ships here. I have counted almost forty of them. What a pity!"

Part of a well known song to Stumpy. He obliqued his head briefly and emitted a cursory "yah." He looked again at the stranger, who wore a tight-fitting overcoat and a rotund hat. A funny sort of an *hombre* to be found seven miles from the nearest shelter on a bitter winter night, thought Stumpy. The other man had faced about until he was once more surveying the cove. Stumpy dragged down the bank to a position beside him. He searched

"*In the Boneyard*," copyright, 1926, by Robert Carse.

him up and down. A German looking bloke by his clothes and accent, despite his clear English, decided the ship-tender.

"Where ya bound?" questioned Stumpy, his voice clear in the rustling clunk of the ice-rush in the river below them.

"I am bound for Osterbeck, the place where, I am told, they make bricks. I have relations of my family there."

"That's a full seven miles from here, mister. Quite a *pasear* on a night like this— I just come from there an' I know!"

The fiery throbbing in the stump of his right leg lent emphasis to the ship-tender's words. The other man stamped his feet on the bank to warm them, vapor clouding his breath as he answered.

"Yes, my ship docked early this morning from Quarantine, where we had been in the Lower Bay overnight. I was guided this way and told to take a train—but—some who have not enough money must walk. I had stopped here for a breathing spell and a cigaret when I saw the ships. I have been a sailor—and the sight here on this fine night, with the ice and the river, made me pause longer than I expected."

Stumpy knocked the dottle from his pipe decisively.

"Mister, I'm ship-tender o' this here boneyard. I ain't been good for sea service for quite a while, so they give me this billet. I got me pretty good quarters aboard one o' these rottin' hookers. You want t' come aboard with me an' get th' cold outa yer bones, then shove off in th' mornin', yer welcome. What d' ya say, sailorman?"

Deep-water sailors in this back-water of life were rare in the existence of Stumpy Guinan. Maybe this strapping young lad with his dictionary English could pass away a few of the dull night hours with yarns of the men running the Western Ocean. Surely a good man to take aboard for a pipeful of tobacco and some black Java on a night like this. These and other thoughts ran through the mind of Gunian as he plowed down the steep trail to the edge of the cove, his newly found guest behind him.

Together they put Stumpy's stout dory overside from the decrepit little dock. The ship-tender swung his bag of provender down into the bow.

"I will row, if you wish, ship-tender—you seem to be bothered by that leg of yours," said the stranger.

"Aye, aye," came Stumpy's curt reply.

The young German looking fellow was right. Every moment that leg of his jumped and flamed with increasing throbs of pain. It was slowly twisting with hot fingers of torture all up through his right side. Clumsily he slipped down from the dock and plumped on the stern thwart. The stranger flung the painter inboard, jumped nimbly aboard and shoved the dory off from the dock.

"Hold 'er up as ya are now, stranger," ordered Stumpy from the stern sheets as the other locked his oars and gave way, "an' watch out fer yer oars in this scum ice."

Yes, and he had made no misstatement when he had said he was a sailor, ruminated Guinan as he watched the swift, sure strokes of the other man as he bucked the high-bowed dory through the scum ice of the cove. Stumpy's face was white with repressed agony as he ordered the other to swing about to port, then ease way when the dory munched through the ice filming a silver-shrouded aisle between two hulks. The stranger grasped at the foot of a Jacob's ladder stringing down to the ice from the deck above and brought the dory alongside. Stumpy sat with his knees raised against his chin in torture, his right hand smoothing at the pain quivers in his shortened leg.

"Stranger, go aloft an' ya'll find a heavin' line by the bul'ark. Toss it down an' I'll bend it around this sack o' canned chuck. Them seven miles almost killed me an' I ain't kiddin' one bit!"

The German looking fellow swayed up the ladder "monkey-way," and the heaving line looped through the air to *ca-chunk* against the deck of the dory beside Stumpy. The ship-tender belayed the line to the potato-sack and the other heaved away. Stumpy looked aloft at the face of the other man where he peered down over the bulwarks. It was a good thirty feet up the ladder to that deck, Stumpy reminded himself. Grimly he made fast the dory painter to the bottom of the ladder, then clinched at the ladder ropes. Up and up he swung, his legs hanging uselessly away from the ladder rungs. His breath labored and rasped, his eyeballs scorched, his head swam with the intense exertion.

Strong hands reached down over the bulwarks and pulled him over the side. Cursing horribly, Stumpy stretched on the

ice-filmed deck, flames of pain twitching through his body from knee to shoulder on the right side. He snaked across the deck, pushing himself with his good leg, and hunched up on the edge of the hatch. The stranger stood beside him silently, knowing that words were nothing but an irritant to a man in such pain as the torture-warped ship-tender twisting on the hatch.

"Cripes! I ain't never had th' pain jumps as bad as that afore," growled Stumpy, bobbing his head in the moon-glow. He pushed a trembling hand holding pipe and tobacco-tin toward the other.

"Fill me pipe fer me, will ya, stranger? Me hands won't answer the helm when I'm like this."

THE stranger flipped a tiny wax match from a cardboard box and held it flickering over the bowl of Stumpy's pipe. He lighted a cigaret and sat down beside the ship-tender on the hatch. Stumpy shoved back his watch-cap and mopped the sweat-beads from his brow.

"*Poquita mas*, stranger—give us just a second an' we'll go for'ard. I hates t' keep any guy out here in th' cold—but I can't navigate no farther until this spar o' mine stops achin'."

"Aye, aye, ship-tender," said the other.

The two men sat smoking stolidly in the hoary luster of the moon. Before them, washed in lucent shadows, the fleet of icy, decaying ships groaned and mumbled in the grip of the ice. Slowly the thrall of the night and the sight of the ghostly huddle of hulks encompassed the two men in a mood of brooding reflection. Stumpy spat at a deck-cleat and took his pipe from his mouth.

"Bless me if this 'ere flock o' derelicts don't give me the shivers sometimes. Th' gang down in South Street calls me th' 'boneyard keeper,' an' it's a good monicker. Good for me—wif one spar—fer it takes two legs t' ship aboard—any sailorman's day o' th' year. I been here four years now. After I come outa th' sick-bay they give me this. Ah, what th' ——! It's all right— I can't grouse, I guess."

Stumpy's voice was low and electric with suppressed rancor. The stranger pointed to the big Hog-Islander lying across the narrow ice aisle from the ship where they sat. Stumpy's eyes followed the gesture of the other, running over the tangled stays and ratlines, the rusting king-posts, the weather-ravaged woodwork of the bridge of the big freighter, product of the war-time toil of a thousand men. The stranger stood up, slapping his ungloved hands for warmth.

"What is the name of the ship anchored to port there, ship-tender? One like that, with the very same house and mast design, was sunk off the Straits of Gibraltar in 1917."

Stumpy lowered his head farther into the body heat of his pea-jacket collar.

"That packet's th' *Emperor Hadrian*, put out at Hog Island, here, in 1917. I was in her sister ship, th' *Emperor Julian*, which was sunk off Gib. in '17, by a German sub. Guess that's th' hooker ya mean, ain't it? Come on, I kin make it for'ard now. I got meself spread out skipper-style in th' officers' mess."

Stumpy leaned back on his hands to gather momentum, then shoved himself to his feet. The stranger offered an arm for support, but the little ship-tender brushed it bruskly away. The tread of their feet brought a crackling response from the ice of the deck as they tramped around the rusted remnants of the midship-winches and pushed open the passageway door of the forward house. Stumpy sputtered a match into flame and the stranger followed him down the passageway. The ship-tender swung back another door and, as his companion stepped into the room, an oil lamp yellowed the darkness of the place, then flared brightly.

The stranger looked around him. What once had been the proudly smart mess-room of the deck and engineer officers of the United States Shipping Board *S. S. Lucette* was now transformed into a snug forecastle by the introduction of a pot-bellied stove, whose pipe arched through a deck ventilator overhead, and a wooden table, which bore pots and pans and general mess gear. Stumpy had utilized boards and sail canvas to batten down the forward port-holes and exclude the shrilling of the winter winds, and had made his bunk on the wide, leather-padded settees which lined the sides of the cabin, where piles of khaki blankets were stacked.

Stumpy clanked down his potato-sack full of groceries in a corner locker and shed his watch-cap and pea-coat. He stumped

across the deck and began a fire in the stove. Flame reflections quivered over his wrinkled mask of a face as he twisted around from his work at the stove to glance at the stranger standing stiffly by the table.

"Take off yer coat an' hat, stranger, an' sit down. I'll have some real hot Java-Jamoch' fer ya right soon."

The stranger smiled slightly and divested himself of the shaggy overcoat and round-brimmed hat. He rested with crossed knees on the settee, his back propped against a stack of blankets. The reaction from the heat of the stove, after his hours of exercise in the extreme cold during his march, made Stumpy's leg tingle again and jump with lingering stabs of pain. He picked up the coffee-pot and two tin cups with a handful of sea-biscuit and clumped over to where the other sat.

They drained the last contents of the fire-smirched coffee-pot and leaned back. Stumpy stroked at the trembling ache of his leg. Tobacco tin rattled against his pipe as he filled it. He dragged a deep inhalation of smoke and released it in a redolent cloud. His wide, bead-bright eyes examined his motionless companion. His guest was a tall, thick-set man, with rounded face and conical skull peculiar to the Teutonic race. If he had seen sea service it had not been lately, surmised Stumpy, for his hands and face showed no evidence of roughening by wind or salt air. Still, he knew ships and ship design, reflected the one-legged man, remembering the other's words as they had squatted on the hatch.

Stumpy clicked his pipe stem against yellowed teeth musingly.

"I was in the *Emperor Julian* when the Boche sunk us off o' Gib. there in 1917. That's where I lost me leg."

His words droned out haltingly. It wasn't often Stumpy spoke of the loss of his "starb'rd spar." His companion sat against the blanket pile, frank China-blue eyes on the ship-tender. Stumpy took a four-point bearing on the stove and expectorated accurately. His blue-veined fingers smoothed over the dungaree cloth casing his right leg, where the pain devils danced and leaped. Again he spoke, slowly, softly.

"We 'ad been down th' Med. wif ammunition and high explosives fer th' Wops, an' discharged th' bleedin' stuff at Spezzia. We come homeward-bound through th' Straits early in th' mornin' watch, through th' mine fields an' subm'rine nets. The ole man gets th' signals from th' shore station on th' Rock that everythin's *buen'*—no subs anywhere. I was bosun o' th' hooker, an' about two bells on th' afternoon watch I had me gang break out th' fire hose for'-ard, an' we was washin' down th' fore-deck. All of a suddint I hears one beast o' a yell from the second mate on th' bridge. He's leanin' agin th' dodger in th' starb'rd wing, his glasses up agin his nose.

"LIKE a bloody black fish, th' big U-boat shakes loose fr'm th' sea an' lays wallerin' on th' surface about five hundred fathoms off th' starb'rd beam. We got a five-inch piece o' junk mounted on th' focsle head an' some nice, hay-shakin' Navy boys back aft t' fire her. They didn't—they didn't have no chance. Th' mate's squawk brung th' ole man topside in his skivvies. The U-boat—th' *U 33* she was—breaks out signals from her little stick an' tells us t' take to th' boats; she's gonna shell.

"An'—so sayin'—she done so! They 'ad a five-incher mounted on her for'ard deck in some sort o' a water-tight jacket. We puts the boats overside an' pulls away fer Africa as fast as we kin stroke—"

Stumpy's voice died out and he crouched, stroking his knee, his teeth grating as he grasped with fierce force at his pipe stem. The stranger crouched rigidly against the blanket pile, hands grasping the edge of the settee. Outside the ragged ice-cakes groaning toward the sea hammered hollowly at the bow, sending grumbling pulsations of sound through the empty ship.

The one-legged man hoisted himself higher on the settee, refilled his pipe and continued:

"Who ever was firin' th' gun on that sub knew his stuff—cause they blew the ole *Emperor* outa th' water—tore away her stack an' bridge—ripped two great holes through jus' below th' water line—an' she begun to go—th' seas got to her boilers—*boweel*—down by th' bow.

"Th' Heinies, almost all o' them, was on deck, watchin' th' fun. We could make out th' skipper through th' glasses, a great fat blighter wif whiskers."

Stumpy's voice deepened in timbre and each word fell clear-cut and distinct, like rollers on a rocky headland.

"Then they begun shellin' the boats.

Th' bloke firin' the five-incher didn't like shellin' unarmed men in open life-boats, 'cause we seen him turn aroun' an' tell th' big fat skipper ta go ta ——. Th' Heinie skipper hit him wif somep'n, and they puts a new gunner on th' job—one who wasn't so fanciful in his ways.

"Them big five-inch shells come skippin' over th' waves like a school o' porpoise' in th' Gulf Stream. I was steerin' boat fer me skipper—who was a religious bloke fr'm Cape Cod, an' was sittin' aside o' me readin' th' Good Book, whilst th' men is cryin' an' cursin' at th' oars. One o' them shells smacked us—they found me—some Limey destroyer did that night—hangin' on t' th' tiller pole, which was still in cahoots wif th' rudder—floatin' like a channel buoy—me right leg—sorta shattered fr'm th' knee down.

"You was askin', stranger, about th' ship alongside o' us here—an' it brung back th' story o' how I lost me starb'rd spar here, seein' as how she's actin' *muy malo* tonight, too. How come ye knew about th' *Emperor Julian?*"

STUMPY'S stare was implicit demand. The stranger straightened his knitted tie under his collar pin. He perched tensely against the blankets, his eyes roving across the room to where light quavers from the mouth of the stove shivered into the darkness. His cough as he cleared his throat could just be heard above the cacophony of the floes *whunking* against the bow.

"I was the gunner of the *U 33* which shelled and sank the *Emperor Julian.*"

His voice was hardly audible above the chattering and murmur of the floes which filled the room with waves of sound. Stumpy slouched back in the blanket mound, his fingers seeking swiftly for his revolver, reposing in its holster in a corner of the settee.

"Yeah?" he parried, as he slipped the cool wood of the revolver butt into his hand. Wide, sea-blue eyes caught his as the other continued. Gradually, with painful slowness, Stumpy pulled the big Smith and Wesson toward him under the blankets.

"Yes," said the stranger, "I was the gunner who fired at the *Emperor Julian* and sank her. But I could not— Look!"

He got down from the settee and advanced toward Stumpy. The ship-tender snapped back the hammer of the revolver and it clicked softly under its heavy covering. The other bent over in front of the crouching ship-tender. The light from the chittering oil lamp threw a nimbus about his closely cropped blond head, exposing a cruel, long scar running from above his ear to the base of his skull. He was inviting death, daring the ship-tender to kill him, realized Stumpy. Why did he purposely give him this chance to kill him? Stumpy fumbled the sentence numbly in his brain. Why did he give him this chance to kill him?

"Look," said the stranger, "that is where Mein Herr Captain Zummelke of the *U 33* hit his gunner with an automatic butt when he refused to fire on open life-boats."

Stumpy's throat was dry and hot as he sought valiantly to articulate.

"Yeah?" he managed.

The blue eyes again locked his as the stranger spoke.

"He—the captain, would not kill me—he had fractured my skull. For six months I lay in the petrol-stinking bowels of the submarine until, at last, we snaked through the mines of the North Sea and into the harbor of Kiel, where the High Fleet lay, confined by the English. There were many mutineers in the submarine service. I was one among many, and on the verge of death from my wound. They put me in the hospital—two years, almost. When I got out—there was no war—and no—kaiser.

"Before the war I had been a quartermaster in the Hamburg-American. But my bad war record and ill-health stopped me. I worked for a time in a factory in Saxony— My uncle in Osterbeck, here, wrote. It took almost my last *pfennig* to come.

"That is my story of the sinking of the *Emperor Julian.*"

Unblinking, the blue eyes steadied on those of Stumpy. He knew Stumpy had the gun under the blanket, Stumpy told himself coldly. The ship-tender relaxed and negotiated an erect position on the floor. He lifted both his hands to his head as he yawned broadly.

"Well, by Jack! It's a funny world, ain't it?"

He limped across the deck with the empty coffee pot and tin cups. He shook down

the stove, sheafed it full of wood, clanged shut the door and fixed the draught. He gestured toward the blankets.

"Help yerself, stranger. I got more blankets 'n Cap'n Cook. Ye kin have that whole side o' th' settee."

The stranger crawled between the blankets as Stumpy blinked out the oil lamp, unstrapped his leg, let it plunk to the deck and raised himself into his bunk. The river churned grunting ice against the side of the ship as the two men lay wide-eyed in the darkness, both visioning the careening ship, stern pushed toward the aquamarine bowl of the Mediterranean sky, then burgeoning downward through the bubbles, while fear-white men strained at their oars and the crew of the submarine watched from her curving back, where she wallowed in the sea roll, glinting darkly like some vast sea-leviathan of steel.

STUMPY pulled the dory through the thin cove ice in the brilliant gleam of the morning sunlight. He grinned at his guest who squatted in the stern sheets as he brought the dory snubbing against the rickety dock. The stranger scrambled on to the dock and leaned down to squeeze the proffered hand. Stumpy shoved off with his oar, to send the dory creaking off into the open ice. He lifted his hand in farewell.

"Hopes you have a better time wif them seven miles than I did last night. So long, stranger!"

# BOOKKEEPING À LA CAJUN

*by* **Nevil Henshaw**

THE old Acadians, or Cajuns, of southwestern Louisiana were a primitive people. Their customs, if quaint, were often ingenious. In those early days the sole intruders from the outside world were the commercial travelers. They saw some curious things.

One of them, making the round of the prairie in his buggy, stopped at a *boutique*, or small Cajun store. The proprietor could neither read nor write. Nevertheless, he had a card index system of credit of his own. This he kept upon pieces of plank, putting down first the mark peculiar to each debtor. Afterward he added a picture of each article that was bought and charged. An admirable system. Yet for once it went wrong.

As the traveler arrived, a customer came in. His name was Gabbie, he had sold a horse, and was ready to pay his bill. The necessary pieces of plank were produced. Gabbie and the proprietor went over them, solemnly checking off each article. In the end the account was correct and complete, save for a single item. This was set down by means of a blank circle.

"It is a cheese," declared the proprietor.

"I have bought no cheese," answered Gabbie.

"You can see eh?"

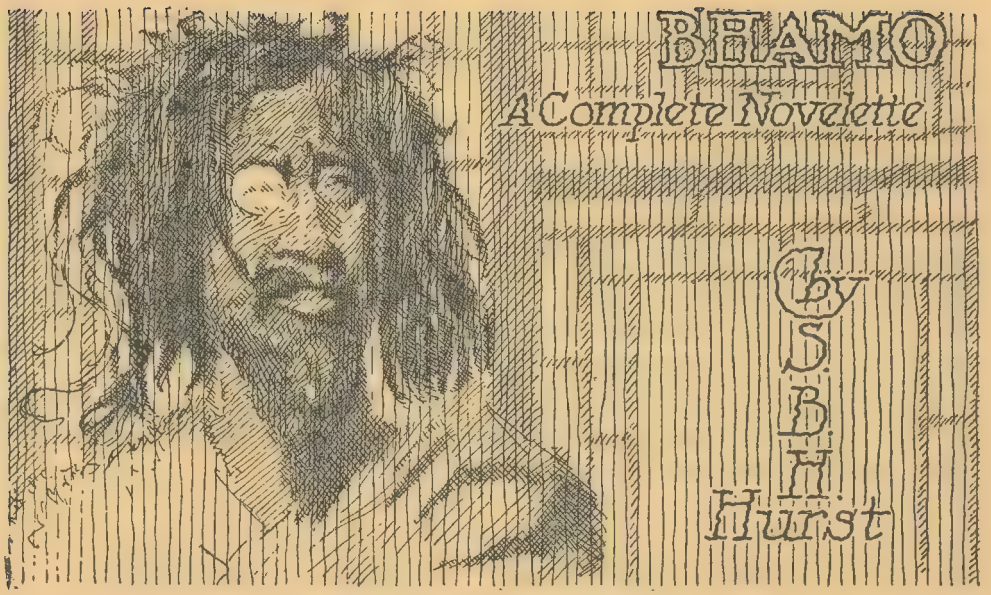
"I can see, but I have bought no cheese."

The argument became violent. It ran the rather copious gamut of Cajun profanity.

Growing weary, the traveler had an inspiration. He suggested a grindstone.

Peace was instantly restored. Gabbie admitted the grindstone. The proprietor cried out in sudden enlightenment.

"Ah!" said he. "I have it now. I put him down like this—O. Then a customer comes in, and I forget to make the hole—⊙."




*Author of "The Mutiny," "The Admiral," etc.*

"GOR blyme," exclaimed the soldier, "and what bleeding museum did you escape from? Or was it a circus or a menagerie?"

"A little of each," replied the disreputable white man, screwing an eyeglass into his right eye, where it glittered quaintly among his awful crop of whiskers. "A bit of all of them, my dear old chap. You see, I was in the House of Lords until, as you so cleverly put it, I escaped."

The soldier laughed.

"Some blooming duke let you out when the others weren't looking?"

"Oh, no," answered the ragged man, squinting in the Burmese sunlight, "not at all. They were all anxious to get rid of me. They actually voted on it. Yes, they discovered I had some slight smattering of intelligence, and they couldn't have been more disturbed if they had found out I had cholera. Indeed, it was worse. Because while one might easily imagine cholera in the House of Lords, the other thing would be quite out of place. So they got rid of me. My personal history should be worth the price of a drink."

The soldier threw the beggar some money.

"Go on. You're a bigger liar than what I am, and I'm proud to meet you. Go and get your drink. But keep away from barracks. It ain't safe for you to be around here. There was a feller like you around barracks some months ago. What happened to 'im was awful. Yes. B Company caught him and gave him a bath— Of course he died from it."

The disreputable "gone native" white man walked from the shade of the barracks into the heat of a Burmese morning, trying, it seemed, to hold himself erect, to remember that he had once been a gentleman, and trying also, but seemingly with ill success, not to hasten too obviously to the native drinking-shop. But he trembled with desire for alcohol, while every moment appeared to increase his nervousness.

He walked along the raised ridge of land which runs at right angles to the Irrawaddy river and is the town of Bhamo, although on the lower ground, subject to the floods and seemingly plowed by them, the many villages also belong to the town, with its then* scattered population of about ten thousand, mixing from Shan-Chinese to hill natives of India, from Chinese to British, with a leaven of Burmese. A turbulent town, unusually heavily garrisoned, the farthest post up the Irrawaddy and the nearest place to the Chinese frontier of all British Burma. An ancient trading place, where the routes converged. A haunt of brigands from time immemorial, still pestered

*1891.

by Kachin outlaws—a boil the government had not yet healed. The drinking-shop was kept by a Chinese-negro half-breed who, when the broken-down Englishman entered, was talking to a huge man who might have been either Shan, Burmese or even Chinese of the north. This one turned slightly as the Englishman called for drink.

"Who is that?" he asked the half-breed.

The breed laughed.

"One of those English that the English don't want, and kick out. A poor —— who hangs on to life by begging. Of no account."

"Hum," growled the big man. "I don't blame the English. One poor bull will weaken an entire herd. But this one will soon drink himself to death."

"Yes, likely," said the proprietor indifferently. "He has been around here a month. He works hard at begging money for drink." The half-breed leered familiarly at the big man. "If he was more use, you might use him, eh? Because I know he hates his own people."

The big man moved a great hand quietly and gripped the hand of the breed. His hand closed like a vice, and the terrible face thrust so close to his own scared the breed into bearing his pains without noise.

"If I tolerate you, you are fool enough to think me your friend—like all your sort try to be familiar. Because you pay tribute you seem to think that I must continue to allow you to live. Be careful."

The big man, known generally as Kwung Ksi, released the hand of the half-breed. The latter turned hastily to hide his pain. The gone native Englishman had swallowed his drink, shuddering. Kwung Ksi went over to him and kicked him. To the intense surprize of the big man, the down and out Englishman neither cringed or cried out. He merely put his monocle into his eye and stared at Kwung Ksi.

"I never enter into kicking contests with a mule," he said quietly. "To kick is a natural thing to the mule, but not to a man. So, as you see, I do not injure my bare toes by striking you with them. Buy me another drink."

Kwung Ksi grinned admiringly.

"By ——," he said, "once you must have been a man. As for drink." He turned and called to the half-breed, "Robber, give this good man, my friend, all the drink he asks for, and see that it is good drink, because I will hold thee accountable. Charge it to my account."

And he turned and swaggered into the sunlight, while the proprietor scowled after him.

"I was a fool," muttered the breed. "Why did I speak so. Now this thing will drink many rupees a day. Kwung Ksi will pay, as he always does—by threatening to have me killed if I try to collect."

And that night the gone native Englishman shoved a letter into the post office at the barracks. It was addressed to a Mr. Wilkinson in Rangoon, but inside the envelope was no communication to Mr. Wilkinson. Instead there was another envelope. On this envelope was written:

To

Lord Cameron, D.S.O.
Lieut.-Governor of Burma,
Rangoon.

Inside this envelope was the following letter:

Dear Pickhead:

I really wish they would make you a governor-general, even if it would make the viceroy jealous. I dislike having to write to minor officials, even when the lieut.-governor is the boss of a big province like this Burma.

When, six weeks ago, you had me informed that the man Menzies—the chap I located so one of your men could arrest him under the *kwe dagon pageda* in Rangoon—had escaped, that he had got up the Irrawaddy and had been seen in Bhamo, I duly came up here to find him and catch him again. In spite of your blundering underlings who let criminals slip through their fingers, when all they have to do is to put them on the ship and take them to the penal settlement at the Andaman Island, I, who do the hard work of hunting said criminals, still remain loyal to my salt, Pickhead, dear, and go on hunting. I came up here, as I said. I have begged—so successfully that I have been hard put to it to keep sober. I now seem to be the protégé of one Kwung Ksi, who introduced himself to me by kicking me. Don't you wish you were in the secret service, Pickhead, and had to stand being kicked by a smelly hill-Chinaman without daring to shoot the brute because you didn't want to spoil your disguise of a down-and-out? It's nice, ain't it? Well now, I can get all I want to drink without paying. Kwung is a robber chief, I have no doubt, but as the Shan States are full of such, I am not troubling about how he makes a living. I am after Menzies, and I have not got a trace of him. I expect to drift across the frontier in my search. So you may not hear from me for some time. Across the frontier just now is no place for a delicate Englishman like me. If you never hear from me, I charge you to see that Menzies is properly hanged, as he will have been the cause of my murder. I mean, if I hadn't come out here after him I would have died elsewhere. But as you sent me here—well, I forgive *you*.—Yours,

BUGS.

The man who had signed himself "Bugs" whose full name was Horace Sinnat, Indian Secret Service—Domestic, turned away from the post-office, his letter in care of the soldiers, safe, and walked in the velvet night frought with the hum of insects, spangled with stars and haunted by the singings and music-noises of apparently every race in Asia.

"I HATE to report failure," he mused, "but so far I have found no trace of the elusive Menzies. In a civilized country one could make more direct inquiries, but here that's impossible. Unless I allowed my awful whiskers to grow, and dressed like a wreck, I could go nowhere where there was likely to be information. A decent *sahib* could get nothing in the way of news. Against that, it is impossible for a gone native bloke like me to show interest in anything but booze. So this is a brute of a job. To the north is inhospitable and mysterious China. All around are savage hills and jungle. Well, it's an interesting life—with always the chance of getting your throat cut around the corner. I will hie me to the drink shop where my credit is so good—thanks to the gent who kicked me. Maybe idle chatter will, with the half-breed, pry loose some scrap of information. I doubt his love for Kwung Ksi as much as I doubt his love for myself. Kwung is not the sort to pay his own debts, much less mine, and the drink dealer would like to be rid of us both. As he could get rid of me with less risk to himself, he may suggest something. And I must follow any sort of lead as things are."

So Bugs staggered into the drink shop, coolies of every province of India and most of China jeering and laughing at him in weird falsetto. But none of them were sufficiently bold to kick him. The native who kicked a white man was an unusual character. The coolies felt sufficiently self-exalted when they vocally abased the apparently degenerate and cast-off member of the stronger race. And Bugs, acting cleverly, seemed scared, fumbled with his eyeglass and drained, as if to obtain courage, the vile whisky the half-breed gave him when requested.

"You have a fine trade here," said Bugs to the breed, fawning before the disgusting caricature of humanity. "And who was the gentleman who said he would pay for my drinks?"

The breed was at the point of saying things concerning Kwung, but his natural caution prevailed. Even to this poor sample of a drink-crazed white man it was not wise to vent his feelings with regard to the big robber. In the past five years Kwung must have consumed several thousand rupees' worth of merchandise, without any intention of paying for the same, besides wringing what he called tribute, for protection, out of the proprietor of the drink shop. Now he had attached a parasite to the whisky supply, and what Bugs consumed, which would be a great deal, would never be paid for, either. Still, until another and more powerful bandit came along, it was wise to be polite concerning Kwung, even when he was absent. It was easier, if not so satisfactory, to vent the long bottled-up poison upon Bugs. Yet the breed was nervous and ready for flight when he began.

"Scum of the earth," he said, his mean little eyes full of readiness either to take cowardly advantage of non-aggressiveness or cringe to a heavy hand. "Scum of the earth!" Bugs seemed to shrivel in alarm and despair at his inability to step on the snake that struck at him. "Scum. Outcast of the vile English! Why ask questions about the man who is paying for your drink. If I tell him that you are curious, he will kill you for a spy. Even wretched a thing as you may be a spy. Don't talk to me. I think I will have the coolies beat you."

Smoke of opium issued acridly from the back room. Tobacco clouded the one lamp in the drink shop. The stench was an insult to the night, and the chatter an insult to humanity.

"Hum," thought Bugs, "this animal either could or would tell me anything I don't know. Why waste time, and take chances of having to kill a dozen coolies? I don't think I will stand for any more kicking. I'll quit the service first."

Then aloud:

"Spy?" he said wonderingly. "But why should I want to spy on my kind patron? Why should any one want to spy on him? What has he done that he should be in danger of being spied upon? He has been kind to me, so I will tell him that I will watch for spies, because you, who are his friend, seem to think he may be spied upon."

The breed recoiled, his face becoming pale

yellow in his alarm. He had put his foot in it. By using the word "spy" carelessly and without intent, to this down-and-out white man he had aroused in the drunkard a sort of damnable gratitude. In the alcohol-soaked brain desire to make certain of continued drink by being of service to Kwung might become any sort of crazy and dangerous—to the breed—folly. And the degenerate white man would be certain to say to Kwung that the drink shop proprietor had told him that his patron was in danger of spies. Kwung would immediately assume that the breed had told all about his being a chief of Kachin robbers—boss of the biggest gang on the Burma-Chinese frontier. The breed had horrifying visions of a very slow death, his feet slowly roasted. What should he do? Something must be done to stop the mouth of this fool. Kill him? Get rid of him? Maybe. But killing even such poor whites as this one was not likely to be a profitable occupation. There were a lot of soldiers in the town who enjoyed revenging, in many and various ways, insults to their own race. And they hanged murderers. A brilliant notion came to the breed. Couldn't he get rid of both Kwung and the white man? By some means which would not involve his sacred self with the soldiers. Maybe. But first he must try to talk the fool spy idea out of his unpleasant and unprofitable customer's head.

So now he fawned upon Bugs.

"I meant robber spies," he said, "for Kwung is rich. But he is bold, and he laughs at danger and gets angry when reminded of it. If you offer to watch for spies, he will be so angry that he will not pay for any more drink for you. Kwung is my friend and I love him. He is, also, my best customer. He has befriended you. Therefore, you are my friend. What would my friend like to drink now?"

Bugs concealed his mirth by a vast effort and by pretending the awful twitchings of need of drink.

"Champagne," he said eagerly. "A quart of it. Once a doctor told me it was good for my disgestion."

The breed would have fainted had he not been sustained by explosive wrath. The combination of the two caused a sort of unhappy calm, in the midst of which, like one hypnotized, he sought for and found a quart of cheap, sweet champagne. It was warm, but it bubbled, and the pop of its cork aroused interest, even excitement in the assembled congregation of coolies. Not even the oldest habitué had ever seen champagne opened in that place before. They crowded around admiringly, while Bugs was compelled to drink the stuff as if he enjoyed it. When they returned to their chatter and gambling it was noticeable that they no longer regarded Bugs with contempt. Rather, they looked upon him with respect, not to say admiration.

"Didn't think he had any, or that he would give it to me, if he had," Bugs mused with almost a moan as he choked over the last swallow.

Then as he put down his glass, Kwung Ksi strode into the shop. He did not condescend to look at the coolies, but they watched him in silent awe. He strode to the counter and saw the champagne bottle. His hand came down in a heavy greeting upon the shoulder of the secret service man.

"By ——," he roared, "you *are* a man! Only a man after my own heart could make a mongrel find champagne in this place. If I sweat the drink out of you, you may become useful. Your own people don't want you and won't have you. But I do. At the worst you may amuse me. I will take you with me!"

The coolies began chattering loudly, afraid Kwung might catch them listening. And the robber roughly dragged the half-breed to one side, whispering—

"Did you buy the ammunition I ordered you to buy?"

"I have it in sacks," the half-breed shivered.

Here was the very thing he dreaded, about to happen. Kwung was going to take the wretched white man with him, and the latter would be certain to babble of spies.

"All right, have it at the back door. I have three ponies. Get on, now." And Kwung hastened the progress of the breed by a vigorous push. Then he turned to Bugs.

"Go out with that drink-seller and see that he loads my horses properly," he ordered.

THEN he turned to bask in the admiration of the coolies.

Bugs, true to the character he impersonated, lurched as he walked. And he obeyed Kwung.

"This may lead to nothing but a dirty camp of Kachin bandits," he mused as he

followed the breed. "But among robbers I may pick up some news of Menzies. He is a sort of arch-criminal, and clever as the devil himself. Anyway, it will be better than hanging around Bhamo doing no good, and ruining my insides with bad liquor. I hope Kwung pitches his camp near the frontier—nearer than here, at any event. I believe I have to cross the frontier to get track of Menzies. Then I have all of China to look for him in. And for a man looking like me to cross into China will look very queer. My sort lack the guts for hard travel. What a life."

He went through the door into the night. And the breed turned upon him abjectedly.

"Do not tell Kwung that I spoke to you about spies, please, *sahib*," he faltered. "Be friend of mine and all the drink—even champagne—you ask for will be yours."

"I thought Kwung Ksi had arranged for that," Bugs grinned.

"But he did not order me to give you champagne. And he might not like to pay for it," said the breed.

"That's true," answered Bugs. He bit his lips to prevent a lapse out of character. "But why bother. Let's load the ammunition."

The breed brought out three sacks of cartridges and, with the help of Bugs, loaded them on the backs of the squat Burmese ponies.

"For our newest rifles," said Bugs thoughtfully to himself. "I have earned my pay by this discovery—if I worked for my pay alone, and not for the fun of it. The gang of Kwung must be well armed. Oh, never mind. What's a gang of Kachins more or less?" Aloud to the breed he said, "But does Kwung walk?"

And the breed, sycophantically, as to the befriended of the great:

"No, *sahib*, you, his friend, may be told. He has horses farther out from town. It might not be wise—too many soldiers about the bazaar—if he rode out with three packed ponies at his horses' heels. Such a cavalcade would attract attention. But be assured. Neither he nor thee will walk. It would be too long a walk."

Then Kwung swaggered through the door. He pushed the breed to one side, inspected the sacks and grunted.

"All right. I shall want more next time. Obey me and continue to live. Come on, white man. I am a humble trader, and you shall be my servant. Spank the rumps of the beasts and we will go. I want to be well away by dawn, and the horses are two miles out of town."

## II

DAWN found them on a narrow track, known only to Kwung, in a dense teak forest that climbed a spur of the hills.

"You bear travel well for one so fallen," said Kwung suddenly. "Here we have ridden all night and you seem less wasted than myself—who am a very strong man. But you English are good fighters, and it is your pride not to show it when you feel beaten. As I said, you have been a man, and with me will become a man again. Take heart, if you need it, for we will rest and eat at my camp within two hours, unless the horses drop dead."

"Good," said Bugs. Then to himself:

"Nowhere near the frontier, then. In fact we've traveled south a bit. I saw him. He took no supplies of food, of course, but thought he had friends along the way. Quite close is this robber-camp. But there are, no doubt, dozens much nearer than the government suspects. I really think I must arrange to have Kwung captured, although I rather like the brute, and he has arranged for my drink bill. But he must be awfully well armed. Most of these Kachin chaps think themselves well off if they have an old Snider or two."

The dawn was changing the forest shadows fantastically. Many birds were already awake, the others were awaking stridently. The monkeys commenced their eternal chatter with the parrots. Lizards of all sizes and colors began to decorate the tree trunks. Gaudy plumage flashed between the branches in the forest sunbeams. And the breath of old Mother Earth rose, sweet-scented and somewhat misty, along the track.

"It's good to be alive when one is a man and free to work," said Kwung.

"You are Burmese, then?" asked Bugs, rather surprized.

Kwung laughed.

"Man hazards a big lie when he claims to be of pure race. But I am a Burman, I suppose. Shan-Burmese, I hate work,

other than mine own raiding, so have Burmese feelings."

Their horses were treading a carpet of radiant flowers, and the spirit of the dawn was intoxicating.

"I agree with you," replied Bugs cordially, and he meant it. Then, as he put his abominable monocle into an inquisitive eye, Kwung stretched out a huge, dirty paw and gripped the hand of the secret service man in hearty friendliness.

"I knew you had been a man," he said, "and you will be again. Fear not, brother, that I will mock thee or allow the others to mock. You are my friend, who quarreled with the English, as others have done, and came to live the only life with me."

They went on, the path rising sharply, the tired horses grunting with fatigue. They came to a clearing.

"Mine," stated Kwung. "If enemies follow me, they must cross this space, and become targets for my guns."

Across the clearing they again met teak-trees, but they were only as a screen for a natural bowl in the earth, perhaps five acres in extent, in which Kwung had for years maintained his camp. But it was no mere camp. It was a village protected by stockades. No single regiment could take it, if the defenders were decently armed. Field guns would be required to reduce it.

"Whew."

Bugs wiped a perspiring brow, but Kwung noted jubilantly that the exclamation had been wrung from him by surprize.

"And the sleepy government, with all its soldiers, does not even suspect there is such a place in Burma," he said pridefully. "Right under their noses, where they never think of looking."

Bugs polished his eyeglass with a dirty handkerchief which had originally been a medley of alarming colors. He put it into his eye and stared at the village. No one seemed to be awake.

"Don't you have sentinels?" he asked.

Kwung laughed.

"Had we been enemies, we had been shot crossing the open space. I have four men there who do no other thing but keep watch in turn."

He whistled shrilly, and the entire place awoke like a hive of bees.

"How many effective fighting men have you—including the four white men and myself?" asked Bugs.

Kwung looked at him gravely, and then dismounted.

"Yes, you are the fighting sort!" said Kwung. "And I have two hundred besides you. We will eat soon, and sleep. When you wake up you will cry for drink, but you won't get any. I keep my men in condition to fight. Besides, if they drink they fight among themselves."

"You must have good control over them?" Bugs hazarded.

"I have," replied Kwung grimly.

In the forefront of the men who came toward them Bugs saw the white men.

"Some poor —— of criminals, compelled to be humorous renegades," thought Bugs "crazy to get back to civilization—like me—but unable. Well, I'm rather another runaway. No, I'm a castaway, an outcast." Then he looked more carefully at the tallest of the white men and blinked.

It was Menzies.

Menzies, the greatest and most spectacular criminal ever known in India. Perhaps the only white man ever admitted into the native criminal societies. Who claimed to be of royal blood, and who certainly had some tremendous influence in high quarters. Who had fought bravely as an officer in the army. A man who, had he never discovered his parentage, would have been one of the great men of the Empire. But he brooded upon his illegitimacy, and took to crime in revenge against society.

Menzies came forward laughing. He clapped a hand on the shoulder of the secret service man, who to him was nothing but a "gone native" white, and said to Kwung—

"Where did you find our dear old friend?"

Kwung kept his word, introducing Bugs as a man who had had a hard time, who was a bit sick, but who would soon be well, as a man the British did not want, but one who would make a good robber and fighter.

"A good man," said Kwung heartily. "He has strength left in him. See—" He flexed Bugs' arms and felt the bicep. He seemed surprized at the powerful arm under his fingers. He patted the secret service man about the chest. In friendly fashion he jabbed beneath the left arm-pit. The expression of his face changed, as a sudden storm changes the face of a summer day.

"What's wrong?" asked Menzies.

"Oh, perhaps nothing," replied Kwung. "But—"

HE TORE open the ragged shirt of Bugs, and showed a gun in an arm holster.

And Bugs, who had not expected a physical examination, as it were, said protestingly:

"What's wrong? Don't you want your men to bring guns?"

He saw Menzies eyes puckering, the forehead frowning with thought.

"It's not that so much," replied Kwung. "But what would a down-and-out like you be doing with one? Where did you get it?"

"I stole it," lied Bugs unblushingly.

"Where?" snapped Menzies.

"At the barracks in Bhamo," said Bugs.

"Give it to me," commanded Kwung. "I want to look at it."

Bugs, having no option, obeyed.

"Hum," said Menzies as they examined the gun, "a service Webly, in good shape. He says he stole it. That's likely enough. But why didn't he sell it when he was so hard up? Something fishy, seems to me."

"I was afraid," said Bugs. "Say, have you anything to drink around here?"

And he acted his craving for alcohol.

"Why did you steal it?" demanded Kwung.

"Why would you?" parried Bugs.

"Because I use guns, while your sort don't," snarled Kwung, losing his temper. "You were begging every day."

"And you have no money," said Menzies.

"I want a drink. Give me a drink, old chap," whined Bugs in his character of degeneracy, feeling somewhat afraid, that, after many years, he had reached the end of his rope—as every other secret service man in Burma had done eventually.

The crowd of Kachin, Burmans, and others, men and women, laughed with vast enjoyment of the scene, while the sun rose warmly.

Kwung swore deeply. He turned to Menzies.

"This is queer—all wrong somewhere. Here is this man crying for drink. He is supposed to have begged and drank for years. We take him for a wreck, and—feel his muscle again! Physical wrecks don't have muscles like he has, and down-and-out whites don't carry well oiled revolvers—Something's wrong."

Menzies, who had been thinking and guessing, reached forward. Before Bugs could move, the criminal had torn all the secret service man's clothes off him about the waist. With an oath, Menzies ripped off the money belt, which Bugs had for years worn, with money for emergencies, and which his cleverness had made unneeded. Menzies opened the purse.

"He lies nicely, don't he?" he said sarcastically. "Nice little sum for a beggar."

"And a gun, and the muscle of a fighting man," raged Kwung. "Why have you deceived me?" he stormed at Bugs.

"Why should I tell all about myself to strangers?" asked Bugs.

"Why are you wandering around Burma in this dirty disguise?" asked Menzies coldly. "You have a gun and money—hidden. You did not steal that gun, or the money. You are a paid spy of the government, and you may as well admit it!"

Bugs, continuing to act the drink-craving degenerate, whined:

"I have saved the money. I want to go back to England, and I have saved the money for years to take me back. I stole the gun. Give me back my money, and for ——'s sake, give me a drink."

"Your muscle," said Kwung coldly.

"You knock about on your feet all over Burma, as I have done, and you can drink all you want without it hurting you much. And I had a good constitution to start with," raved Bugs, trembling and shivering.

"I almost believe the chap is telling the truth," said Menzies, seemingly impressed in spite of himself.

"You're a —— fool," raved Bugs. "And only a swine would see another white man suffer as I am doing."

"Oh, you shall have a drink," said Menzies.

"No," said Kwung.

"I said yes," replied Menzies.

So, thought Bugs, two such strong men—both want to be boss. There may be a way out for me.

"I don't want this man to die," went on Menzies. "If he is a spy we can use him, but whatever he is he needs a drink. You use opium, Kwung. So you can understand this chap's need of whisky. I am going to take the line that he is a spy, but he is only a small one—one of those wandering-around chaps who pick up stray scraps of news to sell to men of intelligence in the secret service. The money and the gun

story may be true. What does it matter—we have both, and are that much better off. But he gets enough drink to keep him alive."

"Oh, all right," answered Kwung grudgingly. "Perhaps we can get something out of him, although we have all the information we want. You take charge of him."

"Come with me," said Menzies to the shivering Bugs. "I can't let another white man suffer in this country, even if you are a sort of petty stool-pigeon. I will give you enough drink to keep you alive, and all you want to eat. Don't try to get away from here, or the guards will shoot you. Come with me."

He led Bugs to his own shack. A Burmese woman was cooking breakfast. Menzies produced a bottle of Scotch, and poured out a drink.

"I seldom use it myself and never when I am out on business," he said. Then in English he spoke, so that the woman could not understand:

"I have helped you for my own reasons. You are no more an alcoholic than I am. Kwung and his gang are good fighters and dacoits, but they lack my brains and knowledge of white men. You are in first class health, and your drinking is only part of your disguise. You may as well own up, old man—you are in the secret service and you're a —— good man. Probably one of the best the government has. I am a judge of men. You were sent to Bhamo to find me, eh?"

The drink had apparently steadied Bugs. He no longer shivered. He put his eye glass into his eye and drawled:

"It's nice of you to flatter me, old chap. But I happen to have told you the truth—or rather, you very cleverly guessed it in the first place. I have, now and then, discovered a thing or two about chaps like our friend Kwung, the dacoit, and sold for a few dibs what I have found out. But as for being a regular member of the secret service! Well, find me a chance to get even with this beastly government and see how I love it."

Menzies shook his head.

"I don't like to do it, but I shall have to shoot you," he said. "The other whites here are the simon-pure petty crook article, but you are not. You are as far above what you say you are as I am above picking pockets. No, you for the big thing—same as me. Tell me the truth and I won't shoot you. Even without the evidence of your health, the gun and the money, I should know you for a superior man, no down-at-heels stool-pigeon. That's merely your disguise, and a —— clever one."

Bugs laughed.

"If I was so blooming clever would I have got into this mess—would I have allowed a dacoit to pack me off to his beastly village, knowing he would be most likely to search me and find the incriminating things you mention. No—unless I was telling the truth I would have dropped both money and guns along the trail and arrived here without any signs on me, other than the need of drink, a shave and some decent clothes. By the way, what's your name? Mine's, or was, Harrison."

"Mine *was* George Latimer Fritz Maurice," replied Menzies. "Does that help you?"

"Not in the least," answered Bugs. "That name is too swell, too toney. Yours is likely to be Jones. But you have no doubt used several since you were born."

Knowing Menzies' pride of birth, Bugs was playing upon it.

"So you think I am a common person," snarled the crook, flushing. "You think I have no blood in me?"

"The usual quantity, I suppose," said Bugs lightly. "But let's not bother about blood. To a nervous man like me, in this situation, the word is horribly suggestive."

"SUPPOSE I said my name was Menzies?" said Menzies quietly. Bugs did not move an eyelash.

"No nearer than the first," he answered. "Menzies is a good Scotch name, and you are not Scotch. But I will call you Fritz, if you wish."

"So you are not sent to Bhamo to find me?" asked Menzies.

"Sent," drawled Bugs. "I was never sent anywhere. I have been kicked out of various places, and told to go to the ——. But that is all the sending I ever had. Do you mean to say that you're of sufficient importance to the government to have men sent after you? Oh, I say, old man, draw it mild. Why should the government want you?"

The face of Menzies grew crimson. But he checked the torrent of words.

"You were a gentleman once," he said quietly. "You were a gentleman before you became a secret service man. So I

will tell you—before you die. In the meanwhile, allow me to inform you that I have royal blood in my veins."

Bugs put a finger to his lips for silence. He looked apprehensively at the unheeding Burmese woman. He tiptoed to the door and looked cautiously around. Then he came back to the bewildered Menzies, and whispered—

"So have I!"

Nothing could have upset Menzies as much as this mockery. His ancestry was his fetish, his religion. His voice when he answered was the voice of a man hoping to make a convert to his belief.

"But I am really, you know," he said, "I am not joking. I can prove it."

"Then why are you here?" demanded Bugs unsympathetically.

"Because there was always the bar sinister between me and success. So I became what the police call a big criminal. I deliberately went into the business of crime. But big political crime. I don't call it crime. Why, if I had not been caught a few months ago in Rangoon I would have stirred up a revolution in Burma. There are millions who want their own king, not the British. I found a son of the last king. If I had not been taken I would have won; and then, after getting rid of the Burmese prince, I would have made myself king of a bigger state than England and Scotland, with Ireland thrown in."

Menzies walked up and down, gesticulating. He seemed on fire.

"And now?" drawled Bugs.

"Now I am on my way to just as big a thing. In a little while I will be the ruler of so many people near the frontier here that the British will be glad to recognize me as king of a buffer state."

"With a gang of dacoits?" asked Bugs sarcastically.

Menzies laughed shortly.

"This is only a means to an end. With these I get money. Then—then!"

"Get money robbing a few villages?" Bugs was more sarcastic. "And what about Kwung—whom I don't like?"

Menzies came close to Bugs.

"If I did not suspect you!" he breathed.

"If you did not suspect me as a secret service man you would make a sort of assistant of me, eh?" smiled Bugs.

His ridicule was driving the criminal to a point where he craved to prove himself of consequence—to that mental state wherein men boast of their crimes, hoping to win admiration of their audience.

"I have two men, in government employ in Rangoon, who would give their lives for me," he said.

"Interesting, if true," answered Bugs. "But what are their lives worth? Never mind. Maybe they are drunkards, like myself— Pass the bottle, old chap."

Menzies obeyed mechanically.

"My friends send me information," he said quietly.

"I wish I had the job, then," said Bugs. "You seem liberal."

"I am. And to those who serve me and are faithful to me I will be more than liberal," said Menzies.

"All right," said Bugs with drunken cheerfulness, "all right. Then I'm your man. What will you do for me if I join you?"

"My men are tried before they are trusted," replied Menzies with the criminal's love of dramatic parade.

"Then try me," laughed Bugs, applying himself to the bottle. "You have insulted me by calling me a stool-pigeon and you have flattered me by saying I am a very clever secret service man. I am beginning to wonder what I am."

"You are pretty near to being a corpse," said Menzies grimly.

Bugs shivered artistically.

"That's an unsociable thing to call a chap," he drawled.

"I can always shoot you if I suspect you." Menzies seemed to have forgotten his grimness. "And I need men—white men—badly. The three who are here will never amount to anything but food for powder."

"I don't like being called a stool-pigeon," said Bugs gravely. "Perhaps if you give me a chance, I can make you change your opinion."

Menzies thought hard. There was a big thing in sight and he had no intention of dividing with Kwung, who was furnishing the means. This dirty Englishman might be anything, but he could be made useful. And Kwung had to be got rid of. And what possible harm could the dirty drinker do? To begin with, he could not get away from the village. In his egotism Menzies thought how all great generals had had to take chances. Napoleon, and the coup d'état— If this fellow showed any signs of

treachery, a bullet would end him. And he could not get away—even if he wanted to.

Bugs saw that it was a psychological moment.

"I'd just as soon sit around and drink," he said simply. "But, even so, I have my pride. But I won't do a thing for you unless you give me your word to help me get back to England, with enough to live on, if I help to make you king of this buffer state you speak of."

Menzies looked straight at him.

"I will try you," he said. "My men in Rangoon have sent me word. There will be a big haul—a very big haul. Enough to finance me for a long while—to get things going nicely without levying from the Burmese. I will try you. Rest here until the time. You shall fight at my side, and if I find you to be a good fighter, I will take you as my man on probation. You won't have to wait long for the test."

Then Bugs did a surprizing thing. Drunk as he was pretending to be, he shivered more than he had done when needing drink. Seemingly he was scared almost out of his wits. His entreating tones were so loud that they startled the entire village from its breakfast.

"No, no. I don't want to fight. My nerves—they won't stand it. I don't mind getting information for you, but I won't fight. I don't like fighting."

Menzies stared in amazement.

"Are you drunk?" he demanded.

"No," whined Bugs, "but I soon will be. I want to be."

And he made a grab at the bottle. But Menzies snatched it away from him.

"So, you poor thing," he said, "you were telling the truth about yourself. And for a moment I thought you were a real man, and not a down-and-out drunkard. But the way you have put away whisky before breakfast should have told me better. However, fight you shall."

Bugs broke out in a positive storm of entreaties. So loud did he whine and implore that every person in the village came to Menzies' shack to see what was the matter.

"What is it?" demanded Kwung.

"This dirty drunkard is scared sick because I told him he will have to fight for us."

"Well, what did you expect? True it is that I thought he had been a man and might become one again, but when I saw how as soon as he saw you he asked for a drink I knew I was mistaken. Kill him and have done. We are the richer for his money and revolver."

"I don't want to fight," wailed Bugs. "I never liked fighting, and my nerves won't stand it."

"He's worse than a sick woman," said some one.

"Let's make a woman out of him—he's no good for anything else," said Kwung grinning. "Make him wash the dirty pots and things."

This brilliant suggestion was received with yells of approval.

"Yes," went on Kwung, "we will keep him for a drudge around camp. No Burman will do such work, so it will be amusing to make a white man do it."

And he made no effort to conceal his sneer at the whites.

MENZIES flushed, but restrained himself by a marvelous effort of will. Kwung was still necessary to him.

"Very well," said Menzies, "but better chain him up at night, or he may run away like any other dog."

"Run!" sneered Kwung. "How could he run past the guards, even if he had courage to try? And do you think that he would risk the snakes by day and the animals by night? No, he would rather wash dirty pots. But you can chain him up if you want. It will be amusing." He drew Menzies to one side. "You didn't tell him anything, did you?"

"Of course not," snarled Menzies whose temper was at a raw edge.

"All right. And he can help the women move the camp when we are at work. I might have known what he was when I saw him cry for drink."

So Bugs was set to washing dirty pots and to all manner of nasty jobs, while the women laughed at him and the men jeered. That night he was chained up. Released next morning, he was set to work again.

But after the long afternoon, with the sun glowing toward its setting, his various bosses could not find him. They sought, they shouted, but could find no trace. The guards swore to vigilance. He had not passed them. The dense masses of snake-haunted jungle would daunt the bravest of men, while impassable to the strongest.

"He is hiding under one of the houses,"

laughed Kwung. "If he crept into the jungle—which he lacked courage to do—he is dead. What matters it? He could not get away. There is no place to go nearer than Bhamo; and he could never walk that far. If he got there, which he could not, he knows nothing but that I have a village here—a village which will be empty tonight when the women move the camp while we are at work. So, forget the swine." He turned upon Menzies. "And that's the last white I help. *You* have yet to prove yourself. I don't even know that your 'information' is true. But we shall see."

And Menzies still held his temper at the insult, for it was not yet time to settle with Kwung Ksi.

III

BUGS had crept into the jungle—between the watching sentries—with a quietness and skill that would have made a North American Indian jealous. The courage to do it, what with the snakes and the two-foot long centipedes and other poisonous things of the day, was something the secret service man did not take into account. Courage was natural to him and fear as impossible as a rotten action to a really decent man.

Apart from the terrors and denseness of the jungle, Kwung might have added that no man could creep up the sides of the cup-like depression in which the village stood. The earth, loosened by his passage, if he made one, would rouse the country in its falling. But, somehow, Bugs, whom the service lovingly claimed could go to hell and arrest the devil without being burned, managed it. But it was a weary, panting and almost suffocated Bugs that reached the rim of the basin and lay down to rest, careless of snakes and of the nastier centipedes. Something of the fierce resolve in the man's soul must have shown itself to frighten away the lower creatures. Because, as he lay there helpless and with his eyes shut, a centipede fully three feet long, with a body like a horrible rope, crawled away as if to hide.

It was about one o'clock. Bugs knew that he had about eleven hours in which to get to Bhamo and arouse the commanding officer of the garrison. If it took him longer than that he would be too late. He had no horse, he was unarmed in a country hostile to Englishmen, and deadly to a solitary traveler. In other parts of Burma the people would not have troubled him, but up near the frontier things were very different. He rose softly to his feet, braced for the greatest, or one of the greatest, accomplishments of his wonderful career. Menzies would believe for the rest of his life that he had told Bugs nothing, but he had told him more than enough! Only some irritated parrots made loud objection as the secret service man went forward, and noisy parrots were too common to be noticed. A family of small monkeys seemed interested, but they said nothing.

"If I get there by midnight there will be time," was the burden of a sort of broken song that beat into his tired brain with the plodding of his weary feet.

A continuance of superendurance. Apart from the courage and will, only a great athlete could have made it. It was like running three full marathons without rest between, through the steam room of a Turkish bath, with death lurking at every stride.

"GOR blyme, wot's dis 'ere bleeding happarition," muttered the almost paralyzed sentry as Bugs staggered toward the guard at the barracks shortly after midnight. "It's that begging blighter with an awful drunk on. He can hardly stagger. So help me, but he's tight."

The faint light of the stars showed the reeling Bugs against the white dust of the road. The sentry, greatly amused, called the sergeant of the guard.

"Drunk," snorted the sergeant. "Wot in —— do you know about drink? Wait a few more years afore thinking you're a bloody authority. That feller has gone and got a sunstroke. Here," he turned to the rest of the guard, "here, to out and help that poor blighter into 'orspital." The guard obeyed, some looking sleepily upwards as if to seek the sun among the stars. The sentry—the same that had given Bugs the money for drink—reached the secret service man first, and tried to arrest his progress with a kindly arm.

"'Ere, old man, 'alt a —— minute. Nobody's a going to 'urt you. You've been and got a —— sunstroke, so you have, and we're going to put you into the 'orspital."

Bugs pushed feebly against the restraining arm. His mouth was filled with dust.

He could hardly mutter the words his weary brain strove to drive to his tongue.

"The commanding officer— Quick, take me to him."

"Deleerius as a goat," said the sergeant with deep sympathy. "——, 'ow bad he must be. Fancy, 'im being so crazy as to talk abart rousing Old Belly-bands. hout of 'is —— bed."

Bugs fought against their restraining hands.

"Take me to the colonel. Where's the sergeant of the guard?"

And now the tired will had forced a snap into the question, so that the sergeant answered automatically.

"Here, sir."

"Sergeant, I'm a bit fagged, but I'm not sick. I must see the colonel at once. Don't try to stop me. And you'll all be wanted. There's going to be a lovely fight."

"But, sir—"

"Don't argue, man. And hurry and wake the colonel before the Kachins massacre a lot of unsuspecting people."

It sounded serious, but the appearance of Bugs gave birth to doubt. Waking the colonel did not appeal to the sergeant. But Bugs was still moving ahead—toward the colonel's quarters.

The sergeant decided to take a chance—it would be better to be tongue-lashed than to miss the fight. This was the frontier. But it did seem awful to rouse the colonel to tell him that a tramp wanted to see him at midnight.

The colonel was aroused. What the sergeant told him remains hidden in their mutual memory; but what he told the sergeant was heard by all. Then Bugs, by a sudden access of strength, pushed past restraint and into the sacred quarters. The sergeant dived for him, but Bugs shouted—

"The last rose of summer!"

The sergeant, seeing his diagnosis apparently confirmed, decided to be gentle with the madman, the rest of the guard snickered. The colonel rendered them dumb by a command which made him seem as crazy as Bugs.

"Return to your post. Sergeant, wait outside for orders. I will talk with this gentleman."

Yes, apparently the colonel was either as drunk or as insane as the dirty white man who had called upon him at midnight. But, colonels being colonels, he was obeyed promptly.

The sergeant had lighted the lamp before leaving the room. In its light the colonel gave Bugs one swift glance. Then he filled a large glass.

"Please drink this before you try to tell me," he said to Bugs, as he sank down on a chair. "You are a bit fagged, you know."

Bugs drank. Then—

"You know who I am?"

"I have never met you, but your credentials are satisfactory. Lord Cameron asked the commander-in-chief to inform heads of army posts that if a man came in shouting 'Last rose of summer' his information was immediately to be acted upon and telegraphed to headquarters."

"Good!" Bugs was recuperating. "Please turn out every available man, with arms and ammunition, while I give you the details."

The colonel gave the order to the waiting sergeant, and the barracks woke like a hive.

"We cannot risk carrying credentials," said Bugs, "so Cameron tried to help us out by these apparently foolish passwords. Listen, please, Colonel, I think and hope we will have time to act.

"I came here seeking information about a white criminal who had escaped from the guard taking him aboard the *Shahjehan* for the Andamans. Wandering around, looking and acting like a down-and-out white, I frequented the drink shop of a half-breed, where one Kwung Ksi, a dacoit, met me and compelled me to go with him to his village. Of course I could have dodged him, but a lead like that was what I wanted. In a camp of outlaws I might hear of the white criminal I sought. I found him there, in Kwung's village. He tried to draw me out by saying I was a secret service man. Really he had no such suspicion. But as he is the sort that suspects every one—as he must—I told him I was at times a stool-pigeon. I said that my great anxiety was to return to England—the curious anxiety of every gone native white. I told my criminal I would serve him if he would guarantee to see me safely in England, with money to live on! The chap is playing for big things. He told me that he had two friends in government employ in Rangoon who sent him valuable information. Then he said that shortly—he meant this morning

just before dawn—I should have a chance to prove myself by fighting for him in a fight where he would improve his financial position. This news, coupled with his telling he has two friends in the government employ—whom I must discover—told me enough. This white criminal has three whites with him, one of the strongest dacoits in Upper Burma and about three hundred fighting men, who, of course will fight until killed rather than be captured and sent to prison. You see why I came to you?"

"I—er—I confess I don't. My training is perhaps different to yours." The colonel flushed as he admitted his slower intelligence.

"Well," said Bugs, as the regiment fell in on the barracks square, "well, the Irrawaddy twists so much that you and your men are farther away. You will have the longer march. Kwung will of course pick up men on his way. He will have about five hundred effectives, or I miss my guess. You know the next landing below Bhamo, where the steamer *Irrawaddy* drops the mail. That's where the fight will be. Because Kwung plans to board that steamer, at the instigation of the white criminal. Her name is the *Salween*."

"My ——!"

THE colonel had been getting more and more excited as the meaning of Bugs' tale came to him. At the mention of the steamer's name he exploded. And while he might not be as quick-witted as the secret service man, he was just as quick in action.

"You see how my white criminal hopes to improve his financial condition?" drawled Bugs.

"Rather," snapped the colonel. "You will rest here in my quarters, of course, while I run along and frustrate this association of white convicts and Kachin dacoits."

"Hardly," retorted Bugs, getting to his feet. "If you can lend me a horse I will ride with you. If you can't, I will do some more walking."

"I have a horse for you." The colonel gave a sharp order to his servant. "Of course, I have been notified about the gold shipment that the bank of Bhamo will transmit to Chinese customers, and I was informed that owing to so many robberies by dacoits, the stuff was to be shipped as machinery, with no one on the *Salween* aware of the value of the cases but the captain. I think a strong guard would be safer, but the government thinks otherwise. And when a gang of robbers can muster five hundred fighting men, a ship's guard would seem weak. Better keep the gold secret. It would have come through secret but for your criminal's friends in Rangoon sending him the news. Still, they might have given the steamer a Gatling gun and a squad of men, even if those —— Gatlings always jam when you want 'em. But it's no use talking. And there must be a dozen white women passengers, too, besides men. Here are our horses. Let us go!"

The British mustered about two hundred and fifty men, including officers, which was a strong force for a Burmese town. In addition, there were a hundred Ghurkas—hill fighters of India—little men, deadly in battle. In the whole of the immense province of Burma there was, at that time, less than a brigade of troops, about half of which were British, the rest Indian natives.

In silence, without sound of bugle lest spies in Bhamo send runners to Kwung—which they probably did, anyway—the little force moved off. Only two men rode—the colonel and Bugs. Half mad for want of sleep, the monotony of the marching feet made the secret service man's fight to keep awake a torture. Soon the road ceased, and the troops struggled along a jungle track. It was his knowledge of the lack of a road that had caused Bugs to dread the soldiers being too late. To have gone by the river, even if there had been a boat, would have meant nearly three hundred miles of travel. The Irrawaddy turns on its own tail very often between the hills in the direction of China and the Gulf of Martaban.

The forest trail suddenly changed to heavy elephant grass which reached to the shoulder. Here the colonel and Bugs had to leave their horses and push through, like men wading a deep stream, while the men held their rifles above their heads. To have taken heavier guns would have been impossible.

As they neared the river-bend toward the landing, the ground became marshy, and the men floundered, cursing and falling. The darkness that proceeds the dawn made

matters worse. And then, cutting through the heavy breathing of the soldiers like some sort of atmospheric knife, came the whistle of the steamer—whistling for the landing where the robbers were in ambush. She was slightly ahead of time. The Ghurkas, lighter men, somewhat in the lead, crowded like happy children at the nearness of the fight. It was all their white officers could do to restrain them from doubling forward in a mob. The heavier British, disturbed at the idea of white women at the mercy of Brutal Shan-Burmese and Chinese, pushed forward the harder, grim-faced and silent.

The steamer must be tying up at the wharf, thought Bugs, a few minutes later, as they breasted a slight rise of ground. And then a piercing wail from the boat's siren sounded like the crying for help of some huge, stricken animal. It ceased suddenly, ominously.

"ON, MEN, on!" shouted the colonel.

From the steamer came a few spluttering shots, some cries. But the rise of land had ended in flat, dry ground, level as a race track. The white men did not wait to reform. Neither did they take the chance of shooting their own people. With fixed bayonets, the Ghurkas waving their terrible *kurkris*, they charged, their perspiring and panting sergeants doing their best to shout some sort of order into the lines of them—to no avail—they charged over that level land with that atavistic and yet idealistic madness which possesses men when they believe their women are being outraged. For the colonel had told them nothing about the gold shipment. A dry-mouthed, raging mob, they charged, their officers as mad as they. Discipline drill had been left in the barracks. Tommy Atkins rushed at the Kachins as he would have rushed at men he had found abusing his best girl in a London Alley. And the Ghurkas, who did not value women in the same way, rushed with them—both regiments mixed up—from sheer love of fighting. The cool-headed Menzies saw the soldiers coming. He also heard them. Had Kwung acted as quickly as Menzies— They turned their gang of almost to five hundred men from their cheerful task of looting, and started individual firing at the oncoming whites.

But the Whites and the Ghurkas came on like a stream that has burst its banks, firing not at all. And the sudden dawn glimmered upon that river of waving steel.

Through the snarling medley of blows and blood that followed, Bugs, with a borrowed revolver, sought Menzies. His job was to get Menzies—not to kill him, but to send him to prison. Saving the gold, the steamer, even the women, were not his particular job. They were incidental happenings while on business bent.

Through the dust and smoke and clashings he occasionally caught sight and sound of the man he sought. Then a mass of swirling and struggling bodies would intervene, and other noises blot out the voice of the arch-criminal. All shooting presently ceased, the Kachins reverting to their natural instincts of fighting, while the whites had not fired a shot and the Ghurkas had cheerfully cut and slashed with their *kukras*. The wonderful dawn showed all things but the puzzled souls of the dead men. The sky seemed to blush for the sight which would greet the rapidly coming sun.

For a time they fought in a sort of sobbing silence. Bugs found himself blocked from his man, like a football player who in futile anger sees an antagonist escape him because of interference. The silence and sobbing broke into wild yammering as the sun rose.

"They break. We have 'em."

The voice shouted jubilantly in Bugs' ear. He looked over his shoulder and saw the colonel, who waved a bloody sword triumphantly. Bugs had forgotten all about the colonel. He tried to answer, but the roar of the victorious army smothered all other sound. Then between them rushed a squad of maddened Ghurkas, pursuing the Kachins. On the left, what remained of two mixed companies of white troops tried vainly to flank the beaten robbers. Again Bugs, annoyed by yelling madmen, tried to find Menzies, while the officers began to bring order into the mob and organize pursuit. Then Bugs stumbled over a heavy body. There were many dead around that body, and it was badly cut up. It had been Kwung Ksi. Bugs heard the bugles sounding the recall. Again the colonel spoke in his ear:

"Can't follow those fellows through that jungle. They know the way and we do

not, and we would lose more men than it's worth. We have done the work, anyway. The gold and the women are safe. The steamer is about to go on, just as if nothing had happened."

"I am looking for a certain white man. A big chap who fought on the other side," said Bugs, grimly indifferent to the welfare of the steamer and all aboard her.

"Oh, he got away," replied the colonel.

"Are you sure?"

"Certain."

The colonel beckoned a steaming subaltern.

"That big white man who fought so hard got away, didn't he?"

"Yes, sir. He was the first to see the game was up, I imagine. He led their retreat."

"——," said Bugs feelingly. And Bugs seldom swore.

"But why bother about one man," said the colonel consolingly. "Thanks to you we have won, and saved the gold and the women. I congratulate you. All our success is due to you, and so I shall report to headquarters."

"Success!" answered Bugs wearily. "Not success, but failure—"

"Failure," gasped the colonel. "My dear good man, you are tired and all worn out. This is success, I tell you. We have—thanks to you—saved the steamer, the women, the gold. Isn't that success?"

Bugs fumbled among his rags, found and adjusted his monocle.

"That was merely an incident," he drawled.

# WAR

## by Bill Adams

WAR is the very deeps of the soul of the devil himself. War makes men shine in valor, and we, seeing war's bright side, watching men's defiant daring, forget that there is no virtue brought to the surface in war-time that can not be equally well practised in times of peace. In war-time men forget themselves, giving all they have for a cause; dying quite happily; flinging love and life away with laughter quite often. Yet that, too, might be done in times of peace also! There is always room and always call and crying need for self-sacrifice.

There are drums and bugles, banners and battalions in war-time. In peace-time virtues go alone, without paradings.

War wakens every lust in the soul of man. Men breathe hate, talk hate, hope hate, live hate, and die at best but hatefully! For to die in a vain cause is a hateful thing, and war will ever be vain.

Peace needs sacrifices. Peace is a holy thing. Peace makes no sacrifices but asks for them quietly, with a humble voice.

War, needless war, welters in sacrifices that she has yelled for and striven for and blatantly accomplished for herself. War bellows; peace whispers.

I hate war; but I love bravery in a lost cause, in any cause.

War is the father and the mother of all lies.

From early infancy little children are taught that war is glorious.

As a child I played with my regiments of tin soldiers, making war upon forts and in the open plains of the carpeted floor. I was taken to see the changing of the guard, and the parading regiments. Before I was twelve I knew hussars from lancers, lifeguards from dragoons, far away. I knew artillerymen from the infantry, and grenadier from marine. I thought that there was nothing to compare with war and war's accouterments. Today I see the whole lie in all its hellish entirety.

When men learn that every virtue that is used by war to disguise the black evil devil of his inmost being may be practised equally in peace and practised to no lost purpose—ah, when men remember that it is the meek who shall inherit the earth, that it is the maker of peace who shall eventually be the wearer of the laurel, that it is the lowly-faced whose face will shine some day the brightest, *that it is the child with the flower and not the warrior with the broadsword who is the true leader of humanity upon its upward climb*—then shall mankind set his foot firmly at last on the lower rung of the ladder that leads from apehood to manhood, and thence to godhood. Till then we lead one another into deep ditches, blindly and blindly and blindly.

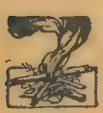
**Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.**

**We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.**

**But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.**

**Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.**

**If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.**



TO WHAT extent is the drug evil due to dope-peddlers, to what extent to anodynes, headache cures and so forth? To combat any evil successfully we must investigate causes and sources as well as remedies.

New York City.

The abomination of narcotics compels a "say" from me, and, if it helps my words, allow me to say:

I come of a family with a peculiar leaning to medicine, no less than nine at present practicing, one a coroner of a great county, elected as a tribute to fine war service. I had two years experience in his office while going far enough in college to find out a deformed hand barred me from the successful use of instruments. My materia medica and therapeutics are fair even now, and I believe in the unalterable *law* of homeopathy. Now—

Hammer the fact home as hard as you can that the big impetus given to a majority of the present uncountable drug fiends is handed to them by *intolerant mothers* in their cradle days. During dentition mostly. The baby cries and frets; the mother, void of common, necessary knowledge, rushes to the doctor; he prescribes a baby anodyne; right away he is a "wonderful physician"—"Why, the baby stopped crying and went to sleep right away." And right there the craving is planted, for the mother keeps the prescription or the number and baby is fed "anodyne" every time he whimpers.

Of course the big drug companies and careless doctors are going to howl if you tell the world how naughty they are behind the protective barrier of a diploma and a license.

I had a girl in my act two seasons ago. Another girl on a bill gave her a heroin tablet for a headache. She asked me if I would get her a bottle of a hundred like her girl friend had. Refusing, I gave a lecture on the evil and her reply was, "——! I didn't ask for a sermon. I never knew what my belly or

system was craving until I got that pill—and I'll get 'em." She went a quick route after I discharged her.

Another point is the rotten doctors who will "relieve a patient" instead of getting at the *cause* and removing it. Go in to any drug store, complain to the clerk of any pain the human body is heir to, and he'll suggest some heart depressant under a "trade name." This is compatible with law, but in time the user has to resort to the higher powers of one of the many derivatives of opium. Thus are other addicts started in a harmless, money-getting way.

If they really "go after" this on the level, they'll find a "million estimated" is closer to ten million. It's only the criminal classes they get on to. Our colleges are full of addicts, trained right there, and the drug peddlers handy. The higher walks of life are hard to reach, but the pickin's are there too.

Only last July when playing Montreal, an ex-prize fighter I knew years ago in "the States" offered me a sealed package to "take across in my hand-bag"—when delivered to an address he'd give me, I would be handed $1,500. I politely declined, and I never saw him about town after that. Had I hollered loud about "such a proposition" I would probably have been bumped off.

Good lord, man, it's bigger than you imagine. Go to it, but hit at the roots of the evil wherever you can find one.—GEORGE B. ALEXANDER.

AS ANNOUNCED at the last Camp-Fire our magazine is going back to its old basis of two issues a month instead of three, beginning with the April issues. With a supply equal to filling three issues a month as at present, the process of selection will naturally become more severe and our standard of quality still higher when there are only two issues to fill. Only the best can be used. Our magazine should be better than it ever has been before.

We know from your letters that the return to two issues every month will be welcome news to the many of you who, with your liking for the magazine unabated, have found that you have not sufficient time for fiction reading to keep pace with the magazine issued at short intervals of ten days. They no longer need miss parts of a serial, or stories out of a series, or "Camp-Fire" and "Ask Adventure," nor feel that they are not in full step with the rest of us. To those who have asked that the magazine be published even oftener than three times a month, there is the consolation that what they lack in quantity will be made up for in quality. And some of them undoubtedly find that a copy every week, fifty-two weeks a year, would in time prove more of a good thing than time at their disposal could carry.

It's like old times to be back on the twice a month basis. Here's to it! You'll find the first April issue on the stands March 8th, the second, on March 23rd. It's only eight days, instead of ten, to wait for the first one.

SOME interesting memories concerning the Indians and various events half a century ago from our old comrade Captain L. H. North. Can not be sure of the spelling of the name of the third Indian mentioned, but that is a minor detail.

Columbus, Nebraska.

In "Camp-Fire" of November 20th is a letter from John Kelly of Tampa, Fla., that was quite interesting to me. He says he hunted buffalo on the Frenchman in Western Nebraska in 1872. I also was on the Frenchman that year in July with the Pawnee and Omaha Indians on their annual summer hunt, but we did not follow up the Frenchman. We crossed near the mouth and followed up the Republican for two or three days, then crossed the Republican and went south for about twenty-five miles where the Indians made their big hunt in which they killed more than a thousand buffalo. There were four thousand Indians in the camp and I think about one thousand of them took part in the hunt. They all were on horseback and rode the horses bareback and were armed with bows and arrows. The hunt lasted about two hours and then they made their camp on a small stream nearby, and cut and dried the meat. This took about three weeks. Mr. Kelly's informant said he killed Whistler, Fat Badger and Handsm. . . . These Indians were killed on Medicine Creek and the old settlers there say they were killed by Newton Moreland and Dan Logan.

I was very well acquainted with Moreland but didn't know Logan. Moreland was later said to be killed in a train wreck on the Santa Fé road. I believe he was conductor on a freight train. Logan killed a man later, and while in jail at Holbrook, Kansas, committed suicide.

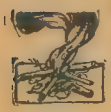
John Nelson's squaw was a sister of Red Cloud. They were with Buffalo Bill's show for several years. Bedden, the white chief, was a lieutenant in the regular army and later was at the Standing Rock agency in Dakota when he was killed by a half-breed. I was in the same regiment with him in the Civil War, and later he was in the regular army and I was with the Pawnee Scouts.

Charley White (Buffalo Chip) was a scout with Gen. Crooke in 1876, and was killed at the battle of Slim Buttes by the Indians.

Three Bears was a scout for Gen. Crooke in 1876-7 on the Powder River Campaign.

My brother, Major Frank North, and myself with one hundred Pawnees were on this campaign and Three Bears was chief of the Seventy Sioux Scouts that were with us. He took part in the fight with Dull Knife's band of Cheyennes in the Big Horn Mountains. In this fight our men (the Pawnees) captured about one hundred horses from the Cheyennes and Gen. McKenzie gave them to our men. A few days later, when we were in camp, the Sioux

under Three Bears came to our camp and danced the Pipe Dance and our men made them presents of horses. Each one of the Sioux was given a horse, and Three Bears got three or four. I think this must have been the first time the Ogallala Sioux ever visited the Pawnees as friends.—CAPT. L. H. NORTH.



STONISH GIANTS, Flying Heads, the "Flateyjarbok" and a joke *re* Thomson Burtis. I'll state in advance that, as comrade Roe hoped, Mr. Burtis got a laugh out of it, so did I and so, I think, will you.

Hibbing, Minnesota.

Comrade Dewey asks about the Stonish Giants and Flying Heads, and you request historians, anthropologists and writers to help him out. Now, I am not any of those things as yet, but I do like to guess, and here are a couple of hints that may help to clarify or maybe muddle the situation.

I DO not know the legend of the Flying Heads, but I offer an explanation. How's that? In the "Flateyjarbok," telling of the experiences of Thorfin Karlsefne, brother-in-law to Lief Eirikson, is this passage:

"The Skraelings also had catapults (*valslngur*). Karlsefne and his men saw that the Skraelings hoisted upon a pole a great ball about as large as a sheep's paunch, blue in color, and slung it from the pole upon the land over Karlsefne's people and it made a great noise when it came down."

Fiske, in his "Discovery of America," says: "According to Mr. Schoolcraft this was a mode of fighting common among the Algonquins in New England and elsewhere. This big ball was what Mr. Schoolcraft calls the 'ballista,' or what the Indians themselves call the 'demon's head.' It was a large round boulder, sewn up in a new skin and attached to a pole. As the skin dried it enwrapped the stone tightly and then it was daubed with grotesque devices in various colors."

Assuming a meeting between Iroquois and Algonquins where this weapon was used, it is easy to figure out a detailed and impressive tale to hand down for the delectation of the Hodenosaunee. Like the scalds, the tellers of tales would find it easier to reply on the supernatural than to apply logic. White man's logic, that is.

A THIRD explanation of the Stonish Giants has occurred to me. Somewhere about the beginning of the seventeenth century—my authorities are not handy, but I have read it in one of Fiske's books, and also in *Adventure*—a hundred or so of Englishmen were set ashore somewhere in Central America. Later, two of then turned up in the fishing settlements of Nova Scotia. If the entire gang started on this long walk they must have passed through Iroquois territory somewhere, which would explain why only two made the riffle and supply a possible origin of the Stone Giants story. Personally, I favor the Norseman theory, since their armor was more complete and there were certainly giants among them. Of course, a Massachusetts origin and a familiarity with the Norse remains like Norumbega Tower and the statue of Leif the Lucky in Boston tends to create prejudice.

HARKING back to the "Flateyjarbok," did you ever read of that hard-boiled lady, Freydis, wife of Thorfin Karlsefne? She was one of our earliest European visitors. Once when those Skraelings attacked the Vikings, she was surrounded, and grabbed a sword from a dead man, pulled out her breasts and proceeded to whet the blade on them. This evidence of toughness so impressed the Skraelings that they immediately beat it. The saga gives other evidences of Freydis's red-bloodedness and general lack of culture, and it is a wonder that some of our Nordic enthusiasts haven't picked on her before this.

The other day on the street car I heard a lady with a copy of *Adventure* say to another "I certainly enjoy these stories of Thomson Burtis." The other lady said, "Yes, I think his bed-time stories are just too dear for anything."

Hope you and Burtis can get a laugh out of that. I did.—CHARLES E. ROE.

ATLANTIS was not between the eastern and western hemispheres, but between the Caspian Sea and the Sea of Azoff. An interesting theory convincingly presented. This hunting for a "lost continent" proves as exciting as any detective story.

Boston, Massachusetts.

Your issue of November 30th contains a letter from J. M. Reynolds on the origin of the Amerindians and ending with Baikie's theory of the Atlantis legend. Perhaps there is no story of antiquity which has had so strong and continuous an appeal to the imagination. Even when handled as pure romance an Atlantis story is still sure to attract wide attention. As an example, the time this magazine carried a translation of the French prize story "Atlantide." This placed the locus of the lost continent in the midst of the Sahara Desert—the plateau of Ahaggar. Although it made no pretense of following the detail of Plato's account, and was plainly the product of a vivid imagination, it may have had something to do with stimulating French curiosity. A French expedition has only recently left for the purpose of exploring the Ahaggar.

THE classic view, which still remains the popular idea, places Atlantis some distance west of the Straits of Gibraltar, and claims it is represented by the Challenger Ridge and Azores Ridge; some extending it southward to the Cape Verdes and northward to Cornwall with an indefinite westward extension to bring it within easy reach of another submerged island called Antillia, including the West Indies and eastward. Whatever can be said in favor of this view is contained in Ignatius Donnelly's "Atlantis" and a recently published book by Lewis Spence largely devoted to the analogies between American and classic civilizations. It may be enough to say that much of these theoretic islands are ocean bottoms 10,000 to 15,000 feet under water or more.

That there was an ancient land bridge between Africa and South America is well known. This was broken in late Mezozoic and finally disappeared in early Tertiary time—millions of years ago. (See Pirsson and Schuchert, "Textbook of Geology,"

Vol. 2, pages 880 and 924). This was long before the appearance of the most primitive ape-man. Indeed the whole order of mammals was still in its infancy. But of course any one has the option of disbelieving the conclusions of geologists and anthropologists. I have found this seems very easy for those to do who have not studied the data on which such conclusions rest.

ANOTHER interpretation is given by H. G. Wells in the first volume of his History of the World. He surmises that the flood legends—of which of course the Atlantis story is one variant—are a record of the filling of the Mediterranean basin. When the last ice-age was at its height Europe was connected with Africa both at the Straits of Gibraltar and by a land bridge from Southern Italy across Sicily to Tunis. The enclosed bodies of water would be much smaller than today, as this is an area where evaporation is more rapid than accumulation; the current through the Straits is eastward. The bottom lands near these reduced seas would naturally be most thickly populated. As the ice-age passed, the ocean level was raised, until finally it broke over the Gibraltar barrier, and the refilling of the Mediterranean basin began. This continued in increased volume year after year. Settled peoples would be first surrounded and then obliterated by the rising sea. Hence the numerous flood stories of peoples of the later Mediterranean civilizations.

The vivid picture of Wells is interesting but unfortunately assumes that the flood records are inaccurate in the important feature in which they all agree—the suddenness of the catastrophe. Plato writes "In a single day and night, the whole of your warlike race was at once merged under the earth; and the Atlantic island itself was plunged beneath the sea and entirely disappeared." (Timæus-Bohn's Plato, Vol. II, page 329).

BAIKIE'S theory is scarcely more fortunate in attempting to correlate the story of Atlantis with the fall of Knossos. Using Baikie himself for our authority, we have the sack of Knossos placed at about 1400 B.C. But, far from its ending trade with the island, we read of the immediately following period: "This period of gradual decadence is, however, the period of greatest diffusion of the products of Minoan, or rather as we may now call it, of Mycenæan art." "Tell-el-Amarna (In Egypt) furnishes specimens of pottery whose degeneracy from the type of the Palace period declares them to belong to those days of decadence." ("Sea-Kings of Crete," pages 208-9).

I respectfully submit that the eighteenth dynasty of Egypt who in 1400 B.C. controlled all Syria to the Euphrates, and the Nile to above the third cataract; who took wives from Boghaz Keui in Asia Minor and from Babylon; and traded regularly with Punt on the coast of Somaliland, were little likely to consider Crete far away, or to concoct fabulous stories about it. Solon visited Egypt where he learned the Atlantis story about 575 B.C.—say 825 years after the fall of Knossos, which was a recent event as Egyptian history goes. And his informant is specific in stating that the events in regard to Atlantis occurred about 9000 years before his time (Timaeus-Bohn's Plato, Vol II, p. 327) and the record was preserved in their sacred writings, *i.e.*, it was no mere tradition.

Finally we have a careful and scholarly synthesis of all the classic flood stories by R. A. Fessenden in his "Deluged Civilization of the Caucasus Isthmus." It is impossible to summarize in brief space this work of 139 pages which is so compact as to be a sort of literary pemmican. I can only present the main conclusions, for proofs and classic references I refer to the book, which abounds in both.

The flood came from the Caspian which at that time extended eastward to the Aral and northward to the retreating glaciers of the Ice Age which shut out the Arctic by a shrinking barrier. The final breaking of this ice dam with high winds and a possibly coincident earthquake due to readjustment of the earth's crust to relief from glacial weight, would easily produce waves of sufficient height (about 40 feet) to sweep most of the great plain extending from the Caspian to the Sea of Azof. Such waves would extend as great bores up the valleys of the Cyrus and Araxes Rivers south of the Caucasus Mountains. The heavy and long continued rainfall, which might seem so important to survivors, could have contributed no important element to the flood, except as it might have caused earth slippages producing local quakes.

That the ancestors of Hebrews, Babylonians, Greeks and Egyptians came from the region subject to this submergence is indicated in many ways. I will quote one for each people: For the Hebrews, note that the ark of Noah grounded on the mountains of Ararat near the upper waters of the Araxes River. The Babylonians reckoned longitude from Mount Shemacha near the eastern end of the Caucasus. With the Greeks, Deucalion, their flood hero, was the son of Prometheus who was always located in the Caucasus. The Egyptian land of the blest was "where the sun rose over Baku and set over Ta-manu." Mount Baku in the east and the Tamau peninsula at the western end of the Caucasus range still retain their ancient names, as can be seen on any modern map.

That so many different human types should have come from such a restricted area seems less remarkable when we learn that in the days of Strabo seventy nations were represented in the port of Dioscurias. In 1912 George Kenan published portraits taken in his trip through the Caucasus showing numerous types as widely variant as Scotch and Chinese. The isolated valleys of the range seem to produce wide divergence in language and physical characteristics.

ATLANTIS was the land between the Caucasus range on the south, the line of the Manytsh Lakes on the north, the Caspian east and Sea of Azof to the west. This was indeed beyond the pillars of Hercules from the Egyptian viewpoint, for these were twin pillars set up near the mouth of the Kuban. That they were vainly sought in the classic location near the Straits of Gibraltar is indicated in Strabo III-V-5.

The portion of Atlantis described in detail by Plato, with its central citadel, its three surrounding canals and triple walls, and its sixty thousand allotments of a hundred stadia each; these are all comprised in the near-island formed by the Terek River and its two chief southern branches. It may be noted that the small opening between these two branches in their upper course is close to the only pass through the Central Caucasus—now called the Pass of Dariel. It was counted a seven days' trip by

foot through this pass—the southern four beside the Aragus or Arabus River from which the pass derived its ancient name, corrupted by the Greeks to Erebus. It makes its way through deep and gloomy gorges, in places passable by only one man at a time.

THE Athenians of the time of Deucalion occupied the lower reaches of the Kuban, and perhaps had their capital near modern Anapa which controls the most practical of the western passes and has a good harbor. The Egyptians—ancient name Kemi—occupied the Crimea, old name Cimmeria. The final combat was indeed due to the Atlanteans trying to extend their control down the Kuban. The armies met on the plain between the upper waters of the Kuban and the Terek near Mount Tamischeira.

We may picture the final scene with the slopes of the mountain occupied by the women who accompanied the Atlantean army. In the midst of the fray the skies darken, then follows a hurricane of rain, and soon the great wall of the first tidal wave sweeps over the plain, obliterating the contending forces. The mountain is 6000 feet high, and the women are saved, but isolated and thrown on their own resources. Doubtless we have here the origin of the Amazons. Classic authors give them a nearby location.

The Athenians and their allies had doubtless used boats in part in ascending the Kuban. Apparently not only did Deucalion and Pyrrha, his wife, escape in this way but also some of his picked corps of fighters, the Leleges, as we hear of their settlement later on the southwest shore of the Black Sea.

THE result of the flood was to silt up the channels of the Kuban and make its lower reaches a vast morass. The effect even in the Black Sea was sufficient to make it dreaded for a long time as indicated by its earliest name, The Axenus, or unfriendly sea.

Of course, the final test of this theory will come with the archeologic investigation of the region—as yet it is untouched. A news item of a few months ago reported an expedition on its way to excavate near Shemacha, but Flinders-Petrie is sceptical of anything being accomplished during the continuance of the Bolshevic régime.

But at least we have here the materials for a glorious romance with the most dramatic incident mankind has known for its fitting climax. What a story Talbot Mundy could make of it!—R. E. BRIGGS.

Another comment on Mr. Reynold's letter:

Brooklyn, New York.

Lost Atlantis again. Once more the old legend crops up, this time in a letter from Mr. T. G. G. Bolitho in your December 30th issue. We are assuredly an incurably romantic nation.

IN A previous letter I outlined the reasons for a non-belief in Atlantis, the probable origin of the legend and mentioned the fact that all the original inhabitants of this hemisphere (Esquimaux excepted) are of one racial stock and came *via* Alaska. As for your correspondent's comment "Some hike!" the journey was no greater than many racial migrations have been and far less fantastic than any theory of origin on a lost continent. He himself mentions the similarity of the Patagonian Indians—all are part of the Amerindian race. Ask any ethnologist.

As to finding volcanic rock in the Atlantic, it is an admitted fact that most of that area was at one time and probably a number of times, solid land, *but long before the time of man.* Consult any standard geological text book. The outlines of the continents have often changed but have remained about the same, except for minor changes like the Bering Sea land bridge, since Tertiary times at any rate, and even the earliest Eoliths—most primitive of all man-made implements—do not go back beyond the Tertiary.

REGARDING Easter Island it is far more likely the refuge of exiles from the mainland than the relic of any continent. There are good reasons to believe that Easter Island is the work of Maya refugees from the Aztec invasion.

When your correspondent speaks of the civilization of southwest France he refers to the Cro-Magnon race. They were indeed a wonderful people for a Paleolithic race who flourished about 20,000 years ago. Pleasant featured, tall and straight limbed, having a higher brain capacity than any of their predecessors, making marvelous weapons of chipped stone and painting their remarkable pictures on the cave walls, they were admirable in many ways. But they were no mystery. Any one interested will learn all about them from Osborn's "Men of the Old Stone Age."

One last thing. Mr. Bolitho is entirely right in pointing out that similiarities of words are of absolutely no value whatsoever in attempting to determine racial relationship.—JOHN MURRAY REYNOLDS.

ONE or two queries arose on points in S. B. H. Hurst's story in this issue and Mr. Hurst's explanations may be of general interest:

So much champagne was used by native princes, so much was carried by coolies from French Indo-China, with inevitable breakage, that coolies knew all about it. It is true that a coolie might get a queer name for the wine, because, in the vernacular, "Esweps comoffic" would mean anything from Eno Fruit Salt to champagne, *via* ginger ale and sedlitz powder.

The money belt would be needed by *Bugs* in case of emergency. We must remember that to "frisk" a man in the East is not only a deadly insult—it would be done only when a weapon about to be used was expected. Even *Kwung*, a Shan-Chinese, did not

Another letter from Mr. Reynolds:

frisk *Bugs*. He felt the gun when he was admiring *Bugs's* muscular development.—S. B. H. HURST.

PERSONALLY I haven't much choice. None of these methods appeals to me in any great degree. It seems hardly probable that any one will ever be able to try more than one of them and make comparisons from first-hand knowledge.

Governors Island, New York.

One of your writers, signing himself "W", expressed the opinion in the Dec. 10th "Camp-Fire" that there is no greater horror than being staked out on an ant-bed. Now I happen to know that this gentle form of torture is no path of roses, but I wonder if W. has ever become acquainted with the kindly attentions of the Chinese?

TALK about torture! Well, if there's anything in that line the Chinese haven't discovered I'd like to know of it. For an example let's take the Death of a Thousand Cuts. I can not see that ant-bed torture could be more horrible than this. Ears, fingers, toes—lopped off solemnly one by one. Then the lips, the nose, the breasts, and slices of flesh from the back, arms and legs. And as W. says: "Your imagination will supply all details that are necessary." The victim is kept alive for hours, sometimes a day or two, whereas in the ant torture he lasts not more than an hour. Care is taken that the arteries are not cut, the idea being, of course, to prevent the man bleeding to death. I don't know what the record is, but one man lasted four hundred and some cuts—and not so very long ago, either. He didn't let out a sound, and at the end, the crowd cheered itself hoarse.

AS FOR the ants gnawing at nerve ends—there's surely nothing pleasant about having a nice but very hungry rat strapped to your body in a glass bowl, with the only way out through your body. Which little pleasure isn't helped a bit by hearing several attentive gentlemen betting on which side the rat will emerge.

There are others who could tell you more about China than I can. As for me, if *that's* the kind of playful little people who live over there, I don't wanta know any more about 'em!—J. R. JOHNSTON.

WILD horses in Australia. An Australian comrade tells us there are not so many as a recent newspaper clipping might have led us to believe.

Pyramid Hill, Victoria, Australia.

In "Camp-Fire" issue I saw the cutting regarding the wild horses in Australia. It is probable that the cutting was from a back number of the Montreal *Gazette* or perhaps it has caused the extent of these wild horses to become exaggerated. To a certain extent the wild horses in central and northwestern Australia are numerous, and yet they are not large enough to make a pest of themselves as yet. In the first place the country is not adapted for any such pest being able to live. Miles upon miles of thorny and sandy deserts—practically no water and what grass there is grows only in tufts—would hardly enable these animals to thrive in great numbers.

AT THE same time I would not like to say that they are or will not become a pest to the development. To thoroughly develop the interior of Australia, which is thousands of square miles in extent, the first problem to be overcome is water.

The fact that the Australian interior is practically wholly covered by artesian wells gives great hopes in the matter of developmental water supply. Several schemes have already been put forward for the establishment of artesian basins at various points, and the interior of Australia will become the greatest producer of wool and wheat in the world. Already without any reliable supply of water, great stock routes extend from the stations in the interior to the eastern and southern coastal cities.—ARTHUR SEALES.

ANOTHER "bowyer and fletcher" is entitled, under special privilege extended to any maker of modern bows and arrows, to be added to our small list. And there's an archery "shooting gallery" in Seattle.

As Mr. Warnick has probably learned from Camp-Fire by this time, national tournaments have been organized for some time.

Seattle, Washington.

You have mentioned in the columns of "Camp-Fire" two or three men who are practising the trade of bowyer. I thought you might be interested to hear that the trade as well as the game of archery has a good start here in Seattle. I have recently started in the business of making archery equipment for the people of Seattle who are interested in the game, and doing the repair work for an archery gallery which two enterprising young men are operating on First Avenue.

I don't ask you to mention me in this connection in the columns of "Camp-Fire," as I am really only a beginner at the game, but I thought you would be interested to know that there is an enthusiastic and growing crowd of archers in this Northwestern city and when they start holding national tournaments we will probably be organized and have a team ready for entry.

Nobody here seems to have heard anything about the anti-weapon law. Looks like a conspiracy of silence to me.—A. D. WARNICK.

AND here, out of the cache, nearly three years buried, is a letter contributing to our argument about headstalls:

Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania.

How about crowding in to the Fire Circle? I have knocked about some in my young life, seen service in the Army (Mounted Service) in Cuba, Philippines China, Mexico, France and Germany (21 years).

Have been a saddler, sergeant and stable sergeant. I have ridden horses north, south, east and west and made saddles and bridles for them.

A bridle is composed of crown piece, bow hand, check straps, reins, curb strap or chain and bits.

A headstall is composed of crown piece, browband and check straps.

That is the Army bridle and the bridles used in the East; in the West every rider has his own style. Some are all one piece headstalls and some are braided. I have one that they call the Cheyenne. It is a one-ear bridle. If some of the doubters would write to some of our big saddlery firms east and west for catalogs, I think they could find out what a headstall is. Charles G. Huse knows what he is talking about. I bet he is or has been a saddler.—ADIOS, AMIGOS.—Id. No. 12436.

CERTAINLY this is true Camp-Fire spirit. We gladly print the following at the request of Leonard H. Nason of our writers' brigade, but he's taking on a very large order. He may be deluged with so many requests that he can't possibly meet all of them, but he'll do his best and if his best isn't enough to take care of all who ask there will, I am sure, be no complainings.

Biarritz, B. P.

I wonder if you would put a notice for me in the "Camp-Fire" of one of the March or April issues that I am making a tour of the battlefields during the latter part of May, and that any of the compadres that want pictures taken of anything on any front occupied by the Americans have but to let me know and I will take them. This applies to houses, graves, dugouts, billets etc. If it's a question of some isolated dugout, if they can give me approximate co-ordinates, the chances are that I can find it. I am doing this because a number of the fellows that I know have asked me to take these photographs, and it occurred to me that there might be many more who would like to have them, too.—STEAMER.

AN ITALIAN reader, who gives his name but not his address, complains that our magazine is campaigning against the Italians. I hadn't known that it was, but he proves his point by claiming that we make a business of using Italians as villains in our stories. That would be more convincing if we had not also been accused of making a business of using Mexicans as villains. Also Swedes. Also Germans. Also Latin Americans in general. And Irish. And English. And a lot more.

I'm fed up on this kind of nonsense. Some one reads a story with a villain of his own nationality. Or maybe three or four such stories in ten or a dozen issues of the magazine—three or four out of eighty or a hundred stories. At once he goes up in the air and howls that we are propaganding against his nationality. He doesn't reason. He doesn't think. He doesn't do anything but howl. All his case amounts to is that we have dared use one of his nationality as villain in a story or two. It means nothing to him that scores of other nationalities figure as villains in our stories. Least of all does it occur to him that most of our villains are Americans. All he sees is that one of his nationality has been used as a villain and it's an outrage, a carefully worked out campaign against his nationality, deliberate and systematic propaganda.

This same Italian jeers at me that we never use an Italian as hero. There you have his number. He goes through our stories with a fine-tooth comb for any Italian playing an unpleasant fiction rôle, but he's so obsessed with his imaginary grievance that he can't see an Italian hero when there is one. *Poggiolo* is the hero or central character of a whole series of stories now running in the magazine. An Italian-American, not an Italian, but this is an American magazine and if any one thinks we're under any obligation to use Italian, French, Turk, Spanish or any other kind of foreign hero he's wrong in the head. We'll use any of 'em as hero, as we have in the past, if it fits the purposes of a story to do so, but as to obligation—bah!

I'm fed up. Tired of writing polite personal letters to representatives of various races and religions explaining what should have needed no explanation. Think I'll have a form letter printed with blanks for inserting the name of the particular nationality that happens to be complaining at the time.

## SERVICES TO OUR READERS

**Lost Trails,** for finding missing relatives and friends, runs in alternate issues from "Old Songs That Men Have Sung."

**Old Songs That Men Have Sung,** a section of "Ask Adventure," runs in alternate issues from "Lost Trails."

**Camp-Fire Stations:** explanation in the second issue of each month. Full list in second issue of every other month.

**Various Practical Services to Any Reader:** Free Identification Card in eleven languages (metal, 25 cents); Mail Address and Forwarding Service; Back Issues Exchanged; Camp-Fire Buttons, etc., runs in the last issue of each month.

# VARIOUS PRACTICAL SERVICES TO ANY READER

**These services of *Adventure*, mostly free, are open to any one.** They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we ask in return only that you **read and observe the simple rules**, thus saving needless delay and trouble for us. The whole spirit of the magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we can help we're ready and willing to try. **Remember: Magazines are made up ahead of time. Allow for two or three months between sending and publication.**

## Identification Cards

Free to any reader. Just send us (1) your name and address, (2) name and address of party to be notified, (3) a stamped and self-addressed return envelope.

Each card bears this inscription, printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of *Adventure*, New York, stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one or two friends, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

Metal Cards—For twenty-five cents we will send you *post-paid*, the same card in aluminum composition, perforated at each end. Enclose a self-addressed return envelope, but no postage. Twenty-five cents covers everything. Give same data as for pasteboard cards. Holders of pasteboard cards can be registered under both pasteboard and metal cards if desired, but old numbers can not be duplicated on metal cards. If you no longer wish your old card, destroy it carefully and notify us, to avoid confusion and possible false alarms to your friends registered under that card.

A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give in full the names and addresses of self and friend or friends when applying.*

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

## Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

## Missing Friends or Relatives

(*See Lost Trails in next issue.*)

## Back Issues of *Adventure*

WILL BUY: Aug. 30 to Sept. 20, Oct. 10 to Dec. 30—1923. Jan. 10 and 20, Feb. 20 and 30, March 10, 20, 30, May 20, Sept. 30, Oct. 30, Nov. 10, Dec. 20 and 30—1924.—Address BOLLING ARTHUR JOHNSON, Lumber World Review, 17th Floor, Transportation Building, 608 South Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

WILL SELL: Back issues of *Adventure*—Address, Richard ZORN, 212 North 2nd St., North Baltimore, O.

WILL SELL: All issues between Nov. 18 and Dec. 18, 1920—Jan. 10 and Nov. 10, 1921—Issues for Jan. 10, Jan. 20, July 30, Aug. 10, Sept. 30, Oct. 20 and 30, and Nov. 10 to Dec. 30, 1923—All issues of 1924 except May 10, 20 and 30—And of 1925 except Mar. 10 Nov. 10 and 30.—Address PETER M. BARNAS, Dallas, South Dakota.

WILL SELL: One copy, Aug. 20, 1922 and all issues between Nov. 20, 1922, to Dec. 30, 1925, for $11.50, purchaser to pay transportation.—Address F. A Street, Chalmette, La.

WILL BUY: Issues for Sept. 30, 1923—April 10, May 20, July 20, Aug. 20 and Nov. 20, 1924.—Address HENRY H. WOOD, 300 Park Ave., New York City.

## Manuscripts

Glad to look at any manuscripts. We have no "regular staff" of writers. A welcome for new writers. *It is not necessary to write asking to submit your work.*

When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

We want only clean stories. Sex, morbid, "problem," psychological and supernatural stories barred. Use almost no fact-articles. Can not furnish or suggest collaborators. Use fiction of almost any length; under 3,000 welcomed.

## Camp-Fire Stations

Our Camp-Fire is extending its Stations all over the world. Any one belongs who wishes to. Any member desiring to meet those who are still hitting the trails may maintain a Station in his home or shop where wanderers may call and receive such hospitality as the Keeper wishes to offer. The only requirements are that the Station display the regular sign, provide a box for mail to be called for and keep the regular register book and maintain his Station in good repute. Otherwise Keepers run their Stations to suit themselves and are not responsible to this magazine or representative of it. List of Stations and further details are published in the Camp-Fire in the second issue of each month. Address letters regarding Stations to LAURENCE JORDAN.

## Camp-Fire Buttons

To be worn on lapel of coat by members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Very small and inconspicuous. Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognise each other when they meet in far places or at home. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere.

When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed, *un*stamped envelope.

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

## Mail Address and Forwarding Service

This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied.

## Addresses

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(*See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure."*)

## A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the section in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert may give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided self-addressed envelop and *full* postage, *not attached,* are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union. Be sure that the issuing office stamps the coupon in the left-hand circle.**

2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**

3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**

4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**

5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose section it seems to belong.**

*Please Note:* To avoid using so much needed space each issue for standing matter and to gain more space for the actual meat of "Ask Adventure" the full statement of its various sections and of "Lost Trails" will be given only in alternate issues. In other issues only the bare names of the sections will be given, inquirers to get exact fields covered and names and addresses from full statement in alternate issues. Do *not* write to the magazine, but to the editors of the sections at their home addresses.

1—3. The Sea. In Three Parts
4—6. Islands and Coasts. In Three Parts
7, 8. New Zealand and the South Sea Islands. In Two Parts
9. Australia and Tasmania
10. Malaysia, Sumatra and Java
11. New Guinea
12, 13. Philippine and Hawaiian Islands
14—18. Asia. In Five Parts
19—26. Africa. In Eight Parts
27, 28. Turkey and Asia Minor
29—35. Europe. In Seven Parts
36—38. South America. In Three Parts
39. Central America
40—42. Mexico. In Three Parts
43—51. Canada. In Nine Parts
52. Alaska
53. Baffinland and Greenland
54—59. Western U. S. In Six Parts
60—64. Middle Western U. S. In Five Parts
65—74. Eastern U. S. In Ten Parts
A. Radio
B. Mining and Prospecting
C. Old Songs That Men Have Sung
D1—3. Weapons, Past and Present. In Three Parts
E. Salt and Fresh Water Fishing
F, G. Forestry in the U. S. and Tropical Forestry
H—J. Aviation, Army and Navy Matters
K. American Anthropology North of Panama Canal
L. First Aid on the Trail
M. Health-Building Outdoors
N. Railroading in the U. S., Mexico and Canada
O. P. Herpetology and Entomology
Standing Information

### Warning to Motor Boaters

HOW to avoid a kind of accident that is becoming all too common. "Ask Adventure," through its expert, Mr. George A. Zerr, who wrote the following letter, is glad to cooperate with the United States Steamboat Inspection Service in its work of promoting safety on our inland waterways.

In view of the many serious accidents to small craft that have occurred on inland rivers that have been improved with locks and dams, especially on the Ohio River and its tributaries, when small boats were swept over existing dams, members of the United States Steamboat Inspection Service have asked your "Ask Adventure" editor of Department No. 36 to broadcast the following suggestion to all those using canoes, row or houseboats.

"That they equip themselves with a small anchor attached to a stout line of from 15 to 20 feet in length. This anchor is to be dropped in the stream at the least sign of danger. It is advised to do this especially when repairs to the motor are made instead of drifting with the current."

Recently a prominent manufacturer of Warren, Pennsylvania, coming down the Allegheny River in a houseboat propelled by a motor went over a dam while repairing his motor. He was drowned and the body not recovered (five weeks), but his companion was saved with great difficulty. The Ohio River at present is improved with more than 42 locks and dams, some located on the right and others on the left bank. These have been built for commercial purposes, with little or no consideration for the small pleasure craft, such as used by adventurers.

There are no day-marks for the uninitiated to inform them when they approach these locks, other than a large power-house and a row of buildings on shore. At night, however, the approach to the lock can be seen by three red lights in a vertical position. I have taken the matter up with the local district engineer, a member of the Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army with a view of placing a flag at the upper end of the upper guide wall. If readers living along the Ohio River and its tributaries would do likewise in writing a letter to the Division Engineer, C. of E., U. S. A., Custom House, Cincinnati, Ohio, we adventurers may secure some safety for those who use the rivers for pleasure but who on account of the low visibility are unable to see danger ahead.

### Sharps Rifles

A PRETTY joyous load for even a modern heavy rifle.

*Request:*—"Was the Sharps made in a .56, or rather, with a .56, bore?

If not, was there a .56 contemporary with the Sharps?

The reason for asking is that a French Canadian came along here a few years ago and wanted to sleep in my barn. After talking with him a while I found that he had been in the First Canadian Division, so I offered to take him in the house; but he said he had to sleep outside. He had walked from the Southwest. He was going to Quebec and I wondered why he had come around by way of Boston, so I asked him. He said he couldn't get ammunition for his rifle in New York and they had sent him to Springfield. He couldn't get it there, but he had managed to get twenty rounds in Boston. There is a dealer there who has about every odd size.

Then I asked about the rifle, which he had sent on by express (and I don't blame him) and my recollection is that he said it was a Sharps. I said I thought the Sharps largest bore was .50 but he said his was .56. He was going to have it bored to .577 because that was what Teddy used in Africa. I can't imagine what any one would do with a .577 around Quebec.

Anyway, I am unable to learn that Sharps made anything larger than that which took the 50/105/550."—R. K. Tarr, Wenham, Mass.

*Reply*, by Mr. Wiggins:—In response to your letter of the 17th inst., I'll say that the only Sharps rifle of .56 caliber of which I have any record was the Sharps & Hankins of Civil War type, and which was bored and chambered for the old .56-56 Spencer rimfire ammunition.

The Sharps & Hankins was a rather unsatisfactory model in most ways, and would not stand a heavy load without the danger of blowing open. In case your Canadian friend *did* succeed in finding a gunmaker foolish enough to bore one up to .577 for him, what the Germans did to him would be mild indeed compared to what the first shot of a .577 from that old Sharps & Hankins would accomplish in the line of damage.

There were many Sharps rifles made in cap-and-cartridge of .52 caliber, using either the linen cartridge and the percussion cap or Maynard primer tape or Lawrence priming pellet, or loose powder and ball could be used as well. All Civil War types, and not safe with modern loads, even if they could be altered to use them.

Sharps rifles were made for metallic cartridges, .44 and .56-56 rimfire, the latter as stated above, and the later Sharps were made for .40 to .50 caliber centerfire loads. But they wouldn't stand the .577, which is a pretty joyous load even in the modern heavy rifles.

I believe the largest load used by Sharps was the .50/125/600, although I have one bored for the .45 bullet and a long bottlenecked case that we can't tree in any authority. But I've never seen any Sharps other than the old Sharps & Hankins for the .56 caliber.

### Nevada

A HIKING trip for a geologist.

*Request:*—"I am taking a correspondence course in mining engineering and am contemplating a trip through the State of Nevada to study geology. What route could you suggest for a hiking trip to cover most of the mining districts and get a good idea of the geology of the State? Am enclosing postage for reply."—Wm. A. Shelburn, Kingman, Arizona.

*Reply*, by Mr. Harriman:—I advise you to confine your study to the six southern counties of Nevada, as they are more generally mineralized than the northern part. Nye County is pretty good territory, but you could start right in at the southern tip of the State, visit Searchlight and the drift, to good and profitable experience. I do not think it matters much where you drift in those six counties, as

long as you carry water and a bedroll, with a supply of grub. Take a burro with you to pack your stuff. The mountains are apt to show you mineral almost anywhere, if you look close.

I am afraid that unless you do take a burro, you will not hike far in that dry country. Cut across from Las Vegas west to Rhyolite, Bullfrog and Beatty, then follow the railroad to Goldfield, Tonopah and on out to the new diggings in the east corner of Mineral County—Butler I think it is called now, and you have covered the best of the modern fields.

Be careful you don't get fooled on silver ore, that is half specular iron. I have known folks to think they had found a bonanza silver mine when it was more iron than silver.

***Names and addresses of department editors and the exact field covered by each section are given in the next issue of the magazine. Do* NOT *write to the magazine itself.***

### Aviation

CHANCES for mechanics—good chances.

*Request:*—"Would be very much obliged if you would answer the following questions:

1. What qualifications are necessary to join the aviation service as a mechanic?
2. Is there any chance for a mechanic to work up to be a flyer?
3. Where can I obtain examination blanks?
4. How old does a person have to be to join the Air Service?
5. What sort of life do they lead in regard to drills, formations, etc.?
6. What is the length of enlistment and the pay?
7. Can you tell me anything about the motor transport corps or where I can find out about it?

My qualifications are:

1. Grammar school graduate, one year high school, three and one-half years machinist and have worked on or driven automobiles since 1916 and worked on only one U-type motor—an eight cylinder; have worked the past six months at the sheet metal trade; like all things mechanical, have served two months in the C. M. T. C. Infantry, have good hearing and eyesight, am not troubled by nervousness and do not get excited easily."—ARTHUR T. SANDBERG, Chicago, Ill.

*Reply*, by Lieutenant Schauffler:—I wish to thank you for your letter of inquiry concerning qualifications, etc., necessary for enlistment in the Air Service as mechanic. I shall try to answer your questions as you gave them to me.

1. To qualify for enlistment in the Air Service as a mechanic, you must have good health, be twenty-one years of age, possess a fair amount of education, and an ability to understand motors.

2. Yes, there is a very good chance for a mechanic to work up to be a pilot. I am enclosing complete information concerning the Army Air Service Cadet Course. This Cadet Course is one of the very best training schools that the United States supplies. You, as a mechanic, can after serving about a year in the Air Service, as a private, make application to be sent to the Army Air Service Cadet Course.

3. Go to the nearest recruiting office for the Army, and make application for enlistment in the Air Service.

4. I believe the enlistment age is twenty-one or over.

5. You will first be sent to a school, where you will be given drills, formations, etc. Of course, drill is a part of the Army life. In the Air Service you will get drills, formations, etc. as you would in any other branch of the service, but not as many of them, and your life will be mostly in the machine-shops, or along the lines.

6. I believe you can enlist at the present time for a year, but the regular term for enlistment is three years. The pay of an Air Service mechanic on the flying status is 50% above the pay of an ordinary private. But you will probably not be put on flying status until you have served at least a year. The base pay of a flying cadet is $75.00 a month, which includes extra pay for flying. The ration allowance is $1.00 per day, and other allowances, such as: clothing, equipment, etc. are those of a private, first class, Air Service. I believe that a private, first class, Air Service draws $30.00 per month.

7. I cannot tell you anything about the Motor Transport Corps but I believe that if you write to the Chief of the Motor Transport Section of the U. S. Army, you will be able to get all the information you want.

As I have said above, I am enclosing complete information concerning the Air Service Cadet Course. I do not believe that you have had enough schooling to be qualified for this course, but you may be able to get away with it, on account of your past experience as a machinist, and your C. M. T. C. Infantry School.

With the best of luck to you; and let me hear from you again if there is anything I can do for you.

### Cuba

HOW the place is run.

*Request:*—"Being interested in the history and government of your island, I am taking this opportunity of writing.

As my ideas of the government of this island are very hazy, I wonder whether you could give me a general idea of how the place is run. If there are any questions regarding this country which you would like to ask in return, I should be very pleased to answer them.

You could not give the address of an amateur Philatelest in Cuba, as this is a subject in which I am very keenly interested. If you could, I would like to exchange stamps of Australasia for those of Cuba and surrounding islands. Thanking you in anticipation."—J. BIGHAM, Wellington, New Zealand.

*Reply*, by Mr. Montgomery:—I am sure your letter has traveled farther than any other inquiry yet received by me since being connected with "Ask Adventure." Cuba is a Republic and the government is based along the same lines as that of the United States.

There is a President, Vice-President, Senate and House of Representatives.

The majority of the offices are elective and for a

period of four years, any one being eligible for re-election.

The following is a list of the present office holders:

President
General Gerardo Machado.
Vice-President
Carlos de la Rosa y Hernandez.
State Department
Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, Secretary: Miguel Angel de la Campa Sub-Secretary.
Justice Department
Jesus Maria Barraque, Secretary: Ricardo Eguilior, Sub-Secretary.
Interior Department
Rogelio Zayas Bazan, Secretary: Juan Vazquez Bello, Sub-Secretary.
Agriculture, Commerce and Labor Department
General Manuel Delgado, Secretary: Nemesio Busto, Sub-Secretary.
Treasury Department
Enrique Hernandez Cartaya, Secretary: Mario Ruiz Mesa, Sub-Secretary.
Public Works Department
Carlos Miguel de Cespedes, Secretary.
Sanitation and Philanthrophy Department
General Daniel Gispert, Secretary.
Educational and Fine Arts Department
Guillermo Fernandez Mascaro, Secretary: Lucas Lamadrid Sub-Secretary.
War Department
Rafael Iturralde, Secretary.
Presidency Department
Viriato Gutierrez, Secretary.
Communications Department
José Maria Espinosa, Secretary: Juan Clemente Zamora, Sub-Secretary.
Comptroller of The Currency
Aurelio Mendez.
Supreme Court Chief Justice
Juan Manuel Gutierrez Quiros.
Speaker of the Senate (24 Members)
Clemente Vazquez Bello.
Speaker of the House (137 Members)
Ramon Zaydin.

If you read Spanish the best works on the History of Cuba are the following:

Historia de Cuba completa por José Bustamante.
Historia de Cuba completa por Alfredo Zayas.

I do not know of any books in English on the history of Cuba, although there are several American Histories covering the Spanish-American War obtainable in any library.

### Connecticut

IT'S not too early to begin to think about bass. At least that's the way this young enthusiast feels about it.

*Request:*—"Now comes the time of year when youth is supposed to cherish especially all manner of fond hopes and high expectations. My contribution to the fund of springtime aspirations is the desire to find some lakes within two (or, at most, three) hours from New York City that have not been completely fished out. If you happen to know of any such Utopian bodies of water I would be most thankful for some knowledge of them, *i.e.:*

1. Camps, hotels or boarding houses on these lakes and probable rates of same.
2. How to reach lakes without automobile.
3. I prefer bass fishing—but what other fish have these lakes to offer?

I would welcome any other data on these lakes that you might give me.

Thanks so much for your trouble. I assure you that any information you give me will be a godsend to this young man who hopes to get out in the open again—if only for week-ends."—MYLES TIERNEY, N. Y. C.

*Reply*, by Mr. Voight:—You have given me a rather large order. Good fishing in Connecticut is almost a thing of the past. We pay a fish license but the powers above only know what becomes of the money.

I think that Pocotapaug Lake in East Hampton is your best bet. There were some mighty nice bass (small mouth), taken there last year. You will also find yellow perch, pickerel, and bull-heads. The best grounds are on all sides of Stoney Island, south of the big island and in the north bay. The best baits are helgimites, frogs and live bait. Do not depend on obtaining bait at the lake but take it with you. If you never have used them, take small goldfish in place of shiner, they are very attractive to bass, live a long time and can be transported. Do not waste time casting at this lake. I have caught them both on fly and plugs here but not often.

As far as boarding houses go I can not help you very much. They change from year to year. I should suggest that you write to the postmaster. Take a train to New Haven and change there for East Hampton. A flivver will take you to the lake.

You will also find fishing that is so-so at Lake Zoar, at Derby casting for big mouth, Lake Wauramaug at New Preston, small mouth, and Griswold Lake at Lyme. All these lakes contain perch and pickerel in addition to bass. Do not forget to obtain a license.

If there is any particular section that you wish information on drop me a line. Bantom Lake in Morris used to be good but it is a thing of the past. I wish you luck but fishing in this state is a hit or miss proposition—mostly miss.

### High Tide at Panama

A PHENOMENON similar to that which occurs in the Bay of Fundy.

*Request:*—"Will you please give me the actual height of the tides at the Canal Zone entrances of the Panama Canal?

There seems to be a great difference in the statements made on this subject, and I know I can depend upon the A. A. Dept. of *Adventure* to give me the facts."—T. ELMGREN, Los Gatos, California.

*Reply*, by Mr. Emerson:—While it is contrary to the usual idea, there is really no difference in the mean level of the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, yet the difference in the tides at Panama is about eighteen feet. This is due to the shape of the Bay of Panama. As the tide sweeps from the Pacific into this bay, it meets a funnel-shaped shore line, which gradually contracts as the tide travels landward. The result is that the tide rises higher and higher until it reaches a maximum of ten feet above the average sea level. When it flows out of the bay it reaches a point ten feet below the average sea level, thus giving a tidal fluctuation of twenty feet. This same rise of an excessive tide may also be observed at the Bay of Fundy. On the Atlantic at the Zone the tidal fluctuation is only two feet.

# Old Songs That Men Have Sung

**Devoted to outdoor songs, preferably hitherto unprinted—songs of the sea, the lumber-camps, Great Lakes, the West, old canal days, the negro, mountains, the pioneers, etc. Send in what you have or find, so that all may share in them.**

**Although this department is conducted primarily for the collection and preservation of old songs, the editor will give information about modern ones when he can do so and *IF* all requests are accompanied with self-addressed envelop and reply postage (*NOT* attached). Write to Mr. Gordon direct, *NOT* to the magazine.**

**Conducted by R. W. GORDON, care of *Adventure*, Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York City.**

THERE are several good ballads popular in Nova Scotia that tell from different points of view the story of the mutiny on board the *Saladin*. One of these has already been published in this department. (See the issue for August 20, 1925.) The following is a different account learned in Cape Breton by Miss C. B. Morrison.

**The Mutiny of the *Saladin***
*(Text of Miss C. B. Morrison)*

"Come all young friends and countrymen,
With pity lend an ear,
And hear my mournful story,—
You can't but shed a tear.
I am here in close confinement
And bound in fetters strong,
Surrounded by high granite walls
And sentenced to be hung.

"Charles Gustave Anderson
Is my right and proper name,
Though I have been in custody
I ne'er deny the same.
I came of goodly parents
Although I die in scorn;
Believe me, now I much lament
That ever I was born.

"My father was a shipwright,
I might have been the same;
He showed a good example,
On him I leave no blame.
Likewise my tender mother
Who for me suffered sore,
And when she'll hear this awful story
I'm sure she'll suffer more.

"O mother, dearest mother,
Could I but see your face
I'd kiss your lips with tenderness
And take a last embrace;
I'd bathe you in my tears of grief
Before this final hour,
Submitting then my soul to God
To His holy will and power.

"O brothers and sisters, now adieu,
So near and dear to me,
So far beyond the ocean,
Whose forms I ne'er shall see.
The happy days I have spent with you
While on my native shore,
Farewell sweet Adievailet
I never shall see you more.

"I shipped aboard the *Saladin*
As you may understand
Bound for Valvarasio (Valparaiso)
MacKenzie had command.
We arrived there in safety
Without the least dismay,
Till Fielding came on board the ship—
O curse that fatal day!

"It was he who had seduced us
To do that horrid crime,
Although we might prevent it
Had we begun in time.
I have shed the blood of innocence,
The same I don't deny;
I have stained my hands in human gore
For which I have to die."

The sheriff and the officers
Came to him in the jail;
He knew their awful errand well,
Tho courage did not fail
They placed that fatal halter on
To end all storm and strife,
And with their hands they greased the cord
That cut the thread of life.

He was led to the gallows,
Placed on that fatal stand;
He viewed the briny ocean,
And then the pleasant land.
The rope adjusted through the loop
Did quickly stop his breath,
And ended his career
In the cold embrace of death.

ANOTHER song from "the north countree" is a bit more cheerful.

**The Canada Pine**
*(Text of R. G. Shaw)*

'Twas the tenth of October when I went astray;
I was drinking bad booze in the town of North Bay;
I hired with an agent who treated me fine
To slash down the timber for the Canada Pine.

We arrived at Kearney, the station we met,
We were feeling quite tough or we wouldn't have went;
When we got to the half-way it was time to dine
And they fed us the prunes of the Canada Pine.

It was there we met the walker, Dave Sword was his name,
A big burly Scotchman from the braes of Glenorr.
When right after dinner he said it was time
We were dangling along for the Canada Pine.

We started our journey and the day it was late;
We covered the trail at a terrible rate;
The roads they were muddy and the hills hard to climb
On the trail that we took for the Canada Pine.

We arrived that night at Camp Number One;
I sure was delighted our journey being done.
I was placed in a bunk with young Jerry O'Brien;
He's a lad who cuts trails for the Canada Pine.

It was early next morning before break of day
I was placed in the bush at one dollar a day;
The sun it was hot and the day it was fine
That I pulled that old "fiddle" for the Canada Pine.

Now the timber was thick and it stood all around,
And the logs that we cut fairly covered the ground,
But it kept us a-dangling the most of the time
For to cut that two hundred for the Canada Pine.

Now the skidders are near for to skid those big logs;
They sure are the boys who are onto their jobs;
They are working for count and they bull all the time
For to get their tobacco from the Canada Pine.

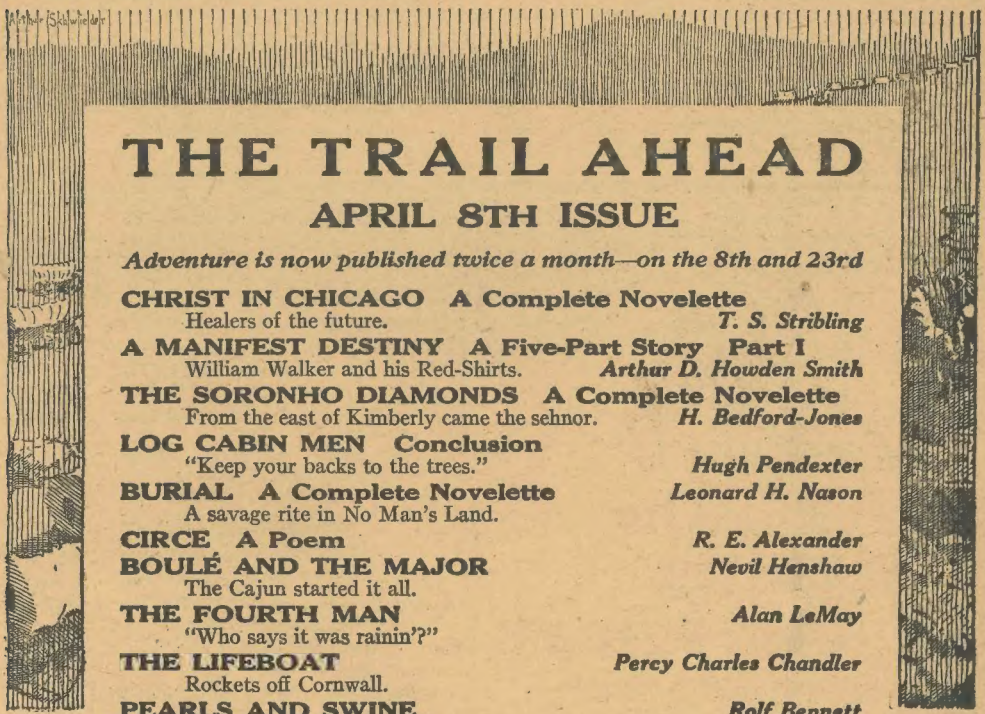
Now the season is over, the logs are all down;
They'll give us our checks and we'll dangle to town.
We'll spend all our money and we'll have a good time
And come back in and drive for the Canada Pine.

DON'T forget that I still want all the information that any of you can give while I'm on the trip. Tell me what districts will furnish the old songs, and give me the names of those who can sing for me. I'm not looking for trained voices, but for those old-time folk who love and sing old music. It isn't the voice that counts, but the song. Many of the best songs I've found were given to me by very old men and women who could scarcely sing a note.

Remember too that I want texts and different versions of all the old songs I can get. Don't fail to send them in just because you don't remember the whole song. Fragments and scraps are often of great service.

There are still some photographs taken on the road that wait for any of you who send in contributions to the department.

ADDRESS all letters to R. W. Gordon, Care of *Adventure*, Spring & Macdougal Streets, New York City.



# THE TRAIL AHEAD

## APRIL 8TH ISSUE

***Adventure is now published twice a month—on the 8th and 23rd***

**CHRIST IN CHICAGO A Complete Novelette**
Healers of the future. *T. S. Stribling*

**A MANIFEST DESTINY A Five-Part Story Part I**
William Walker and his Red-Shirts. *Arthur D. Howden Smith*

**THE SORONHO DIAMONDS A Complete Novelette**
From the east of Kimberly came the sehnor. *H. Bedford-Jones*

**LOG CABIN MEN Conclusion**
"Keep your backs to the trees." *Hugh Pendexter*

**BURIAL A Complete Novelette** *Leonard H. Nason*
A savage rite in No Man's Land.

**CIRCE A Poem** *R. E. Alexander*

**BOULÉ AND THE MAJOR** *Nevil Henshaw*
The Cajun started it all.

**THE FOURTH MAN** *Alan LeMay*
"Who says it was rainin'?"

**THE LIFEBOAT** *Percy Charles Chandler*
Rockets off Cornwall.

**PEARLS AND SWINE** *Rolf Bennett*
Poached stones come dear.

**COGHAN'S LAMB** *Howard E. Morgan*
Both woodsmen dived into the river.

**STILL FARTHER AHEAD**

THE TWO ISSUES following the next will contain *long* stories by Gordon Young, Arthur O. Friel, H. Bedford-Jones, Gordon MacCreagh, W. C. Tuttle; and short stories by Bill Adams, Ernest Haycox, F. St. Mars, John Dorman, George E. Holt, Lyman Bryson, Jack Rendel, Fiswoode Tarleton and others; stories of daring men in dangerous places up and down the earth.

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# By the Beard of the Prophet

If you have been shaving for about ten years, you may recall my first prophecy that Mennen Shaving Cream would quickly bring about a revolution in shaving method.

Several million men prove every morning that I was right. The proud, rebellious wiriness of their whiskers is all gone. Dermutation strips 'em off so gently and smoothly that a man hardly knows his razor is in action.

Then, some years ago, I told you about Talcum for Men. At that time, men classed talcum with rouge and lip sticks. But to-day, the custom is almost universal to rub on a velvety, soothing film of Talcum for Men, which protects and doesn't show white on your face.

Last year, I pulled my third prophecy. I said that if you would try Mennen Skin Balm, you would find it the most delightful and efficient after-shaving preparation that ever touched your face. Incidentally, it's great for chapped lips or roughened skin—as wonderful for hands as for the face. Antiseptic and astringent. Right now, to-day, Skin Balm has won national acceptance and its sales are amazing.

These three should be used together. They give the "Complete Mennen Shave," than which there "ain't no better."

*Jim Henry*
*(Mennen Salesman)*

## MY QUESTION CONTEST

***Here is another chance to win a magnificent $50 traveling bag***

Send in an answer (100 words or less) to the question below. Best answer wins the bag. Contest closes April 10. I am the judge...Watch for the next contest in an early issue.

**The QUESTION:**

***For what special reason do you use talcum after shaving?***

Mail your reply to The Mennen Company, *Jim Henry Contest*, 377 Central Ave., Newark, N.J.

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And those terrible deeds—what was the awful motive in her heart? What connection had the crucifix over her bed with the mysterious symbols on the dead man's hand? What uncanny means did she employ that left no trace—stripped her victims of their identity and baffled the shrewdest detectives and physicians?

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